The Lebanon News

Russell County's Family Newspaper Since 1880

VOL. 104 NO. 23 | WEDNESDAY, JUNE 24, 2026 | LEBANON, VIRGINIA | $2

Fire claims the life of a Dante man

By SHAWN STREET
shawn@virginiamediainc.com

A house fire in the Roanoke Hill area of Dante has claimed the life of one man.

Carl "Sonny" Sutherland was killed when his house caught fire on the afternoon of June 17.

Sutherland's neighbor, Cristin Townsend, said he was a Marine Corps veteran, a former paramedic and a lifelong resident of Dante.

Townsend said the fire erupted between 12:00 p.m. and 12:30 p.m. While waiting on fire departments to arrive on the scene, Townsend said her 15-year-old son and others attempted to help Sutherland.

"My son and some others tried to get him out," she said. "But the smoke was so thick and heat from the fire was so great, they couldn't get inside the house."

"It was my son's fifteenth birthday," she added. "There was nothing they could do. He feels terrible."

Dante has been without a fire department since the late summer of 2024. Crews from surrounding communities arrived on

SEE **FIRE CLAIMS | 2A**



The remains of Carl Sutherland's home in Dante. Sutherland was killed in the fire.



Rising country music star Drake White headlined Cedar Fest.

Drake White headlines Cedar Fest, praises Lebanon

By SHAWN STREET
shawn@virginiamediainc.com

Rising country music artist Drake White headlined the seventh annual Cedar Fest in Lebanon on June 13. Shortly before taking to the Main Street stage, White posted a video to social media of himself while driving through the town.

"You know, we're in Lebanon, Virginia today and noticing all of these houses. This is just America. This is what this country is made up of. Its normal families with normal front porches."

White added, "There's more good people than bad. There's more good places than bad. You just got to get out here, in these beautiful places like Lebanon, Virginia and see for yourself."

Cedar Fest kicked off on June 12 with perfor-

SEE **DRAKE WHITE | 3A**



Channing Wilson brought his outlaw style of country music to Cedar Fest

Honaker woman charged with murder

By SHAWN STREET
shawn@virginiamediainc.com

A Honaker woman has been charged with first degree murder following the death of her husband in November 2025.

Russell County Sheriff Bill Watson said Amanda Christina Hawkins, 45, has also been charged with money laundering and two counts of distribution of a Schedule II drug.

The charges stem from an alleged poisoning that authorities said occurred on No-vember 12.

According to posts on Hawkins's social media, her husband, 49-year-old James Hawkins, was hospitalized on November 12 for what family members called at the time "a diabetic coma."

Hawkins allegedly set up a GoFundMe account shortly thereafter. On the fundrais-ing page she allegedly wrote, "My name is Amanda Hawkins my husband is in re-ally bad shape has brain damage and swelling on his brain any donations would be appneed money for gas and food and some medical bill."

James Hawkins passed away on November 21 at Ballad Health Hospice House in Bristol, Tennessee.

An extensive investigation continues to be conducted by the Russell County Sher-iff's Office with assistance from the Holston River Regional Drug Task Force.

"The Sheriff's Office and the Drug Task Force did an excellent job investigating this case," stated Russell County Commonwealth's Attorney Zack Stoots.

Watson added, "Our office worked diligently to investigate and used every re-source to bring Ms. Hawkins to justice. The office is committed to working to keep our communities safe."

Hawkins is currently held in the Abingdon Regional Jail without bond. She was arraigned in the Russell County General District Court on June 16, 2026

Honaker to celebrate America this weekend

By SHAWN STREET
shawn@virginiamediainc.com

The United States of America will celebrate 250 of freedom on July 4. As is tradi-tion, Russell County's festivities will begin in Honaker.

The Honaker Independence Day Festival will be held on Saturday, June 27, be-ginning at 4:00 p.m.

Fireworks are scheduled to light up the sky beginning at 10:00 p.m.

Craft vendors, food vendors and plenty of entertainment will be available.

This year's celebration offers something new for the children in attendance. The town's new splash pad will open throughout the event.

Holly Ann and Dirt Road Rising will be headlining the town's stage. Based out of East Tennessee, Holly Ann and Dirt Road Rising is a country band with a blend of classic

SEE **HONAKER TO CELEBRATE | 2A**



Fireworks will light up the skies over Honaker this Saturday night.

Police officer, fire and rescue member injured while apprehending suspect in St. Paul

By SHAWN STREET
shawn@virginiamediainc.com

A St. Paul police officer and a member of the Castlewood Fire and Rescue de-partment were injured in an incident on June 17 in St. Paul.

Officials said the officer was injured while apprehending a suspect on Broad Street. The officer was taken to Bristol Regional Medical Center in Bristol, Ten-nessee for treatment.

Castlewood Fire and Rescue also had a member injured in the incident.

That department issued a statement saying, "Castle-

SEE **POLICE OFFICER | 4A**

The Lebanon News
Russell County's Family Newspaper Since 1880

The Lebanon News is published weekly by Virginia Media, Inc. (540) 389-9355.
Periodicals postage prices paid by Virginia Media, Inc, 1633 W Main St, Salem, VA 24153

INSIDE THIS WEEK: Opinion: 4A, 5A | Sports: 1B, 2B | Puzzles: 5B | Classifieds: 6B

Mary Jane Robinette Hess

MARY JANE ROBINETTE HESS, age 81, of the River Mountain section of Lebanon, Virginia passed away Saturday (June 13, 2026) at her home. Born September 28, 1944 in the Horton Ridge sec-tion of Swords Creek, Virginia, she was a daughter of the late Howard Junior and Gladys Plaster Robinette. A lifelong resident of the area, she was a member of Ivy Ridge Chapel Church in Cleveland, Virginia. She had formerly been employed by the Russell County School System as a cook and later cafeteria manager, working at Lebanon High, Elementary and Middle Schools for twenty-six years.

On February 2, 1970, she married Corbin Kenneth Hess who preceded her in death on October 15, 2010. In addition to her parents and husband, she was also preceded in death by two broth-ers, Howard Robinette and his wife, Joyce, and Ronnie Franklin Robinette; one nephew, James Melvin Hale; and several brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law.

Survivors include one son, Barry Kenneth Hess of the home; one daughter, Sharon Cardwell and husband, Hal of Bristol, Tennessee; three brothers, Edward Robinette and wife, Sharon, John Per-ry Robinette, and Roy Allen Robinette; three sisters, Margaret Ann Robinette, Carolyn Hall and husband, James, and Marie Byrd; two special nieces, Destiny Nightengale and Hannah Meadows; several nieces and nephews also survive.

The family would like to extend a special thank you to Legacy Hospice, Adoration Home Health, Marie, Byrd, and Destiny Nightengale for all their loving care and assistance provided during her illness.

Funeral services were conducted at 12 Noon on Thursday in the Honaker Funeral Home Chapel, Honaker, Virginia with Rev. Danny Rhea and Rev. Guy Harris officiating. Interment followed in Ketron Memorial Gardens in Lebanon, Virginia.

Pallbearers were Mark Helton, Brad Meadows, Scotty Keen, David Church, Garnett Dye, Grat Dye, Randy Byrd, Noah Byrd, and Matthew Robinette.



Mary Jane Hess

Honorary pallbearers were the men of Ivy Ridge Chapel Church, Lance Nightengale, Darrell Hess, and Hal Cardwell.

The family received friends after 5 PM Wednesday at the funeral home, where an evening song service was conducted at 7 PM.

Online condolences may be made at www.honakerfuneralhome.net.



Holly Ann and Dirt Road Rising will be performing at the Honaker Independence Day Festival.

HONAKER TO CELEBRATE

FROM PAGE 1A

and southern rock.

For more information the Honaker Independence Day Festival, contact the Hona-ker Town Hall at 276-873-6556.

The Town of Cleveland will honor America with its celebration on July 3.

Both Lebanon and St. Paul have festivities planned for July 4.

FIRE CLAIMS

FROM PAGE 1A

the scene to put out the fire. Townsend estimated it took approximately 45 minutes for the first fire truck to arrive.

"That's no fault of the fire fighters," she stressed, expressing her appreciation for their efforts. She said a trip that takes just a few minutes by car is considerably longer when a fire truck filled with water has to drive uphill on a two-lane road.

"We don't blame the fire department," Townsend explained. "But covering this whole area should not be put on St. Paul."

She said it was especially frustrating due to the fact that a fire hydrant was just feet from Sutherland's house. "If we had access to the fire hydrant, maybe we could've done something to put out the fire," she said. "Or if there had been a fire department within two miles of where he lived. His death was unjust."

Townsend said many in Dante feel as if their community has been forgotten.

"We're still a town," she said. "We're still a people. This is a great community but we feel forgotten. Having a fire department should be a top priority."

The status of the Dante Fire Department has been a controversial issue since August 2024. On August 14 of that year, Russell County Administrator and then Emergency Management Director Lonzo Lester issued an order stating, "Russell County Dispatch: By order of the Director of Emergency Management, effective immediately ALL operations of the Dante Fire Department are hereby suspended until further notice."

The following day Lester provided more information about the order via statement he posted online. It read, "There has been several emergency management issues that have come to the attention of the county during the annual Line of Duty review and the Dante Fire Department Facility Grant from the Federal Congressional Direct Spending legislation that concerned the county's Department of Emergency Management."

The statement went to say, "The major emergency management issue is the Dante Volunteer Fire Department's failure to maintain a current roster of 20 effective, trained and certified members to maintain compliance with the Code of Virginia and its ability to deliver emergency fire services in the Dante service area per the county's emergency operational plan."

Other areas of concern included the department had let its non-profit and corporation status expire and could not provide training or financial records.

Following the cessation of operations of the Dante Volunteer Fire Department, the county formed a mutual aid agreement with fire departments in Castlewood, Cleveland and St. Paul to cover the Dante area.

Investigations by law enforcement followed as did a lawsuit filed against the county by department treasurer Daniel Meade.

That lawsuit was dropped in November 2025. During a hearing in the Buchanan County Circuit Court, Judge Elizabeth Reece Robertson formally dissolved the department.

The following day, the board released a statement about the case.

"From the outset, the county's position has been that the lawsuit was a politically motivated filing with no factual or legal basis," the statement said.

"Shortly after the litigation was initiated, it was discovered that the entity filing the suit was not the real Dante Volunteer Fire Department. Instead, the plaintiff was a corporation formed in Sept. 2024, also using the name Dante Volunteer Fire Department, and created by a resident of the Castlewood community. This individual and their corporation had no legal affiliation whatsoever with the actual Dante Volunteer Fire Department."

According to the statement, county officials conducted their own review of the operational and legal status of the "real Dante Volunteer Fire Department." The statement outlined four findings from that review. They are as follows:

1. The real Dante Volunteer Fire Department's corporate status was terminated by the Virginia State Corporation Commission in 2015.

2. Despite this termination, the department had continued to operate without corporate or nonprofit status, without proper insurance, and without verified training compliance.

3. Upon learning of, and confirming these facts, the county issued a cease-operations notice in Aug. 2024 to the real department to prevent continued operation in violation of state law and to ensure public safety.

4. The county subsequently filed a separate action requesting that the Court formally dissolve the defunct corporation.

The statement went on to say, "It remains the county's goal to establish a new, properly trained, fully insured and legally complaint fire department in the Dante community once appropriate funding is secured. The board of supervisors is committed to ensuring the safety of all residents and will continue to work toward a permanent and sustainable solution."

In April federal officials approved $602,000 to replace the defunct Dante Fire Department as part of the fiscal year 2027 appropriations bill.

Unmanned trash sites not closing July 1

By SHAWN STREET
shawn@virginiamediainc.com

A post was made on Facebook last week that stated the Russell County Board of Supervisors had voted to close all unmanned dumpster sites. Since the post was made, rumors have spread throughout the county that the sites were closing effective July 1.

While the board discussed trash concerns during its June 15 budget workshop, no vote was taken to close any dumpster sites.

During the workshop, Russell County Administrator Lonzo Lester said the dumpster site at the former Oak Grove Elementary School will be sold, along with the rest of the property. "That leaves Drill and Finney," he said.

According to Lester, the Drill site is one of the busiest in the county. "We pull more tonnage out of Drill than we do Lebanon," he explained.

Part of the problem with the Drill site is trash allegedly coming from Buchanan County. It has long been suspected by officials that Buchanan County residents use the Drill site to dump their trash.

"Buchanan County knows it and they laugh about it," Lester said.

Lester added Russell County has the lowest tipping and tire fees than any of its neighbors. Board members agreed to study fees issue and discuss it during a future meeting.

Calendar of Events

Support Group for Female Survivors of Sexual Assault

Women survivors of sexual assault are invited to attend regular support group meetings or individual support if you prefer. Survivors meet in a safe environment with other women who have had similar experiences. Clinch Valley Community Action, Inc. Family Crisis Services knows and understands what a survivor is going through. The fact that you are alive and reading this means that you are in-credibly strong, courageous and intelligent. We are here to aid in the recovery process with individu-al support sessions. Please call and let us help. We are a confidential service. For information, call Ranetta Davis (276) 889-8206 or Haley Slade at (276) 988-5583.

Sons of Confederate Veterans Meeting

Sons of Confederate Veterans Capt. John F. McElhenny Camp 840 meets 4th Thursday each month at 6:30 p.m. at the Russell Co. Public Library, Lebanon, VA.

Counts Family Reunion

Descendants of John & Mary Counts, early 1789 settlers of Russell County's Glade Hollow, will gather for the 85th Counts Family Reunion on Saturday, August 1, 2026, beginning at 10 a.m., at Dickenson County's Breaks Interstate Park indoor meeting rooms, located between Haysi VA and Elkhorn City, Kentucky.

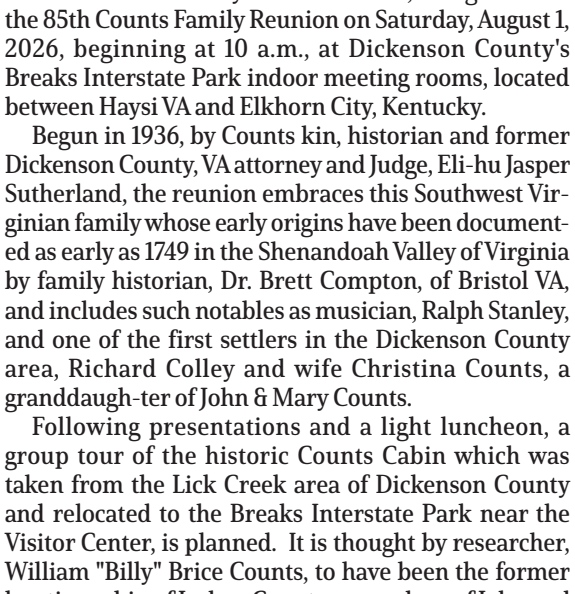
Begun in 1936, by Counts kin, historian and former Dickenson County, VA attorney and Judge, Eli-hu Jasper Sutherland, the reunion embraces this Southwest Virginian family whose early origins have been documented as early as 1749 in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia by family historian, Dr. Brett Compton, of Bristol VA, and includes such notables as musician, Ralph Stanley, and one of the first settlers in the Dickenson County area, Richard Colley and wife Christina Counts, a granddaugh-ter of John & Mary Counts.

Following presentations and a light luncheon, a group tour of the historic Counts Cabin which was taken from the Lick Creek area of Dickenson County and relocated to the Breaks Interstate Park near the Visitor Center, is planned. It is thought by researcher, William "Billy" Brice Counts, to have been the former hunting cabin of Joshua Counts, a grandson of John and Mary Counts, and dates back to some years before Joshua's death in 1883. Plans are underway to begin the nomination process for the cabin's inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places.

Honaker High School Class of 1966 Reunion

The Honaker High School Class of 1966 will hold its 60th Reunion on Saturday, September 19, 2026, at the Russell County Conference Center in Lebanon. Details about the time, as well as the cost per person will be forthcoming. Also, the Class of 1968 has asked to join us. It'll be a great time for us to reconnect!

Contact Jim Baldwin for more information at the following: Phone/Text 276-608-7186, Email: jim-baldwin2@outlook.com



THE LEBANON NEWS

The Lebanon News (USPS:308-400) is published weekly on Wednesday by Virginia Media, Inc. Periodicals Postage Paid at Lebanon, Va. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Lebanon News, 1633 W Main St, Salem, VA 24153

OPINIONS

Views of columns and letters expressed in this section represent the views of the writer and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Lebanon News or Virginia Media, Inc. Anyone wishing to respond to a column or editorial may contact us at (540) 389-9355. Submitted letters must be signed. Please include full address and, for verification only, a telephone number where you can be reached during the day.

STAFF

MICHAEL SHOWELL
Publisher, Virginia Media, Inc

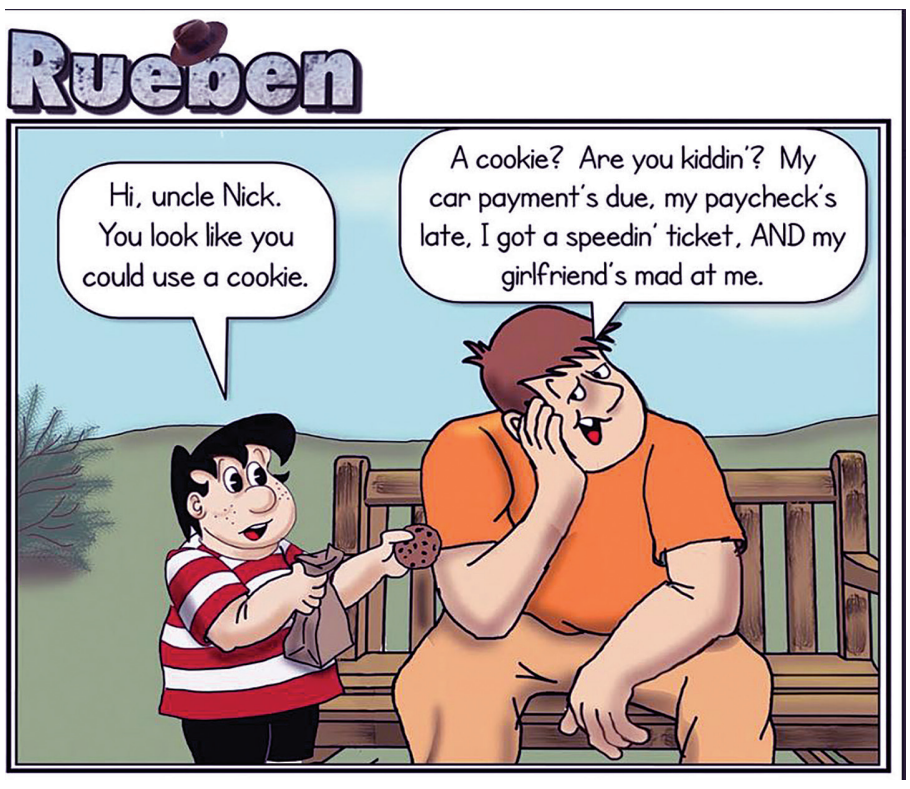
AILA BOYD
Executive Editor, Virginia Media, Inc

WENDI CRAIG
Advertising

CONTACT

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR
1633 W Main St, Salem, VA 24153
Telephone: (540) 389-9355

Member
Virginia Press Association





Commonwealth's Attorney Zack Stoots was among those honored by the VSP as a fraud fighter.

Commonwealth's Attorney Stoots honored as fraud fighter

By SHAWN STREET
shawn@virginiamediainc.com

Zack Stoots, the Russell County Commonwealth's Attorney, has been honored by the Virginia State Police as a fraud fighter.

Stoots, along with seven others, was presented the Fraud Fighter Award by the Virginia State Police.

"When it comes to stamping out insurance fraud, some people's shoeprints are bigger than others," VSP officials said in a press release. "That's why, every year since 2003, the Virginia State Police Insurance Fraud Program has honored those who go above and beyond in our battle against fraud – with the Fraud Fighter Awards."

These awards are presented to nominees who make exemplary contributions to Virginia insurance industry anti-fraud efforts while working for an insurance company's fraud investigation unit, as a Commonwealth's attorney or in Virginia's law enforcement community.

Others presented with the award were:

Jane Collins – Senior Investigator, Virginia Bureau of Insurance

Joseph J. D'Onofrio, Jr. – Commonwealth's Attorney, Richmond City

Eric Flick – Lead Investigator, Virginia Bureau of Insurance

Scott Letteer – Detective, Henrico County Police Division

Wathana Prak – Digital Assets Administrator, Henrico County Police Division

Jason VonCanon – Detective, Henrico County Police Division

Jonathan Yarbrough – Detective, Henrico County Police Division

SWCC receives Food Lion Feeds grant

Students at Southwest Virginia Community College will have greater access to free, nutritious food thanks to a $3,500 grant from the Food Lion Feeds Charitable Foundation.

The funding will support SWCC's Food for Thought student food pantry, helping more students meet basic needs and stay focused on their education.

The grant is part of Food Lion Feeds' "Nourishing Our Neighbors" program, which supports local organizations working to address food insecurity.

"Many of our students are balancing school, work and rising living costs, and too many are struggling to afford food," said Lisa Haywood, dean of student success at SWCC. "This grant helps ensure our students have reliable access to the food they need to succeed."

The Food for Thought pantry provides free food and essentials to SWCC students throughout the year. The additional funding will help expand inventory and increase support for students experiencing food insecurity.

The Food Lion Feeds Charitable Foundation supports community partners across its 10-state footprint in their efforts to fight hunger. Since 2001, the foundation has awarded more than $25 million in grants to help nourish communities.

Candidates for town council elections announced

By SHAWN STREET
shawn@virginiamediainc.com

The campaign season for seats on the town councils of Cleveland, Honaker and Lebanon is official underway.

The deadline for candidates to file the necessary paperwork to appear on the November 3 ballot was last week.

In Cleveland, Mayor Linda Couch will be running for reelection unopposed.

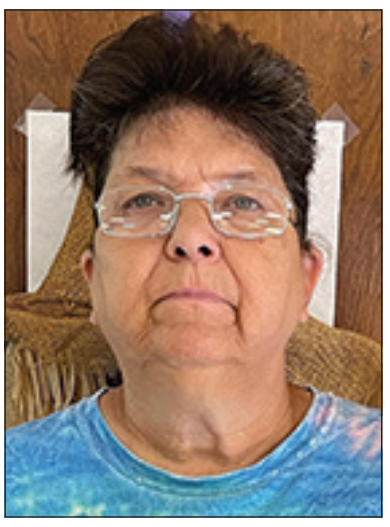
Four of the current five members of the Cleveland Town Council are seeking reelection. They include Megan Chumbley, Ty Harris, Jeremiah "Tiny" Neal and Thomas Vance.

A three-way race for the mayor's office will be on the ballot in Honaker. Mayor Jodi Eaton is being challenged by Earnest "Bubby" Short and Tommy Testerman.

Five candidates will be competing for three seats on the Honaker Town Council. They include Dewey "Benny" Chafin, Scott McGlothlin, Jennifer Short, Cathy Ray and Nancy Taylor.

Three seats will be contested on the Lebanon Town Council. Incumbents Nina Fields and Leonard Kegley will be running for reelection. Challengers include David Boyd, Carri Bradshaw and Andrew Mays.

Long time council member and current vice mayor, Deanna Jackson, is not seeking reelection.



Cleveland Mayor Linda Couch will be unopposed in November.









Celebrating the Nation's 250th Birthday: Part 1

America's 250th anniversary is an exciting time for Virginia communities and the United States.

Because this is truly a big deal, I will dedicate two columns to honor this remarkable moment in our history.

Our 250th birthday is a historic milestone that inspires patriotic celebrations, festivities and tradi-tions.

As the State at the epicenter of the independence movement, Virginia's role cannot be understated.

VA250, a commission created by the Virginia General Assembly, was established to detail and commemorate the significant role that Virginia played in our country's founding.

Numerous VA250 projects have been active in Virginia's Ninth District.

The "Martinsville Missile," a VA250 car project created in Martinsville, recently broke the world land-speed record for a stock car at 253 miles per hour!

I co-introduced a resolution with Senator Tim Kaine to recognize this tremendous feat. The resolu-tion declares that the House of Representatives extends its congratulations to the VA250 Car Pro-ject.

While Virginia's Ninth District continues to shape history in our 250th year of independence, we can examine the ways in which American independence is rooted in our communities and our region.

One of my favorite columns from past years relates to historic figures from the American Revolu-tion era for which our communities bear names.

Such names include those who were key to our nation's Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776.

Seven Virginians lent their names to this foundational document, including George Wythe, for which Wythe County is named.

Of the other 49 that signed the document, perhaps no figure enjoys as much acclaim as Benjamin Franklin. Franklin County is named in his honor.

Maryland's Charles Carroll of Carrollton is credited for Carroll County's namesake.

Virginia's fingerprints are not just all over the Declaration of Independence, but also the battlefields where independence was won.

Most notably is George Washington, the commander of the Continental Army that defeated the British Empire at Yorktown, Virginia. Washington County celebrates its namesake for the great revolutionary leader.



WEEKLY REPORT
FROM THE CAPITOL

One of Washington's aides, William Grayson, helped in the revolutionary combat. Grayson Coun-ty pays homage to his service through its name.

Montgomery County gets its name from Richard Montgomery, who led the invasion of Canada and died at the Battle of Quebec in 1775. A belief that cultural and identity similarities existed between Quebec and America fueled prospects of a 14th American colony.

Meanwhile, militia leaders like Brigadier General Joseph Martin, for which Martinsville enjoys its name, helped preserve the frontier. At one time, Martin received a commission from then-Virginia Governor Patrick Henry to be a key diplomat on the frontier.

Henry, whose "Give me liberty, or give me death!" speech helped fuel the revolutionary spirit, has both Patrick and Henry Counties named in his honor.

Another future Virginia governor, Henry "Light-Horse Harry" Lee, was a former revolutionary officer who would earn a Virginia County, Lee, in his name. At Washington's memorial service, Lee eulogized our first president, "first in war, first in peace and first in the hearts of his country-men." Lee helped serve in campaigns that took place in the South.

Numerous frontiersmen and forces played vital roles in the South, including the Overmountain Men. These frontier units travelled from Abingdon to the Carolinas to fight the British at key bat-tles such as Kings Mountain and Cowpens.

The Overmountain Men consisted of valiant soldiers like William Russell. Russell's father by the same name served at the Battle of Point Pleasant, a conflict where Andrew Lewis helped lead American frontiersmen to defeat Chief Cornstalk and the Shawnee tribe.

The Russells fought with great resolve, and thanks to their revolutionary heroism, Russell County earns its name.

While American colonists sacrificed blood, sweat and tears on the battlefield, also meaningful were the contributions from foreign figures.

Polish count Casimir Pulaski was a European nobleman inspired by the American cause. Credited for saving George Washington's life, he later died at the Battle of Savannah.

For Pulaski's service, Pulaski County gets its name, and a U.S. Congressional resolution posthu-mously proclaimed Pulaski an honorary U.S. citizen.

Our country's fight for independence took many forms that are immortalized in Virginia communi-ties, history books and other materials. I will continue to honor and recognize the nation's 250th birthday in next week's edition.

If you have questions, concerns, or comments, feel free to contact my office. You can call my Ab-ingdon office at 276-525-1405 or my Christiansburg office at 540-381-5671. To reach my office via email, please visit my website at https://morgangriffith.house.gov/. Also on my website is the latest material from my office, including information on votes recently taken on the floor of the House of Representatives.

Another letter from your mountain cousin

Dear Cousin,

The good book says, "We like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way:…" Isaiah 53:6.

This verse cuz, reminds me of that aggravating solid Black Angus cow, (we call her Elizabeth after a great niece) over in the holler. We took her and her partner "La Rue" to live on my Mom's farm awhile back.

La Rue is still there, but Elizabeth is never content unless she jumps a fence to get to the grass she wants. Over here, that grass was the hay patch.

She would tear through barbwire like no bodies business. If you chased her out, she would jump the fence, tear it down, you would put it up and go eat lunch, come back and she would be in the hay patch again.

So now, she is over in the holler, Eagles Nest Road, somewhere! (Call me if you see her) She is like these folks that Isaiah is talking about, wandering away sheep.

Now I must admit our one fat sheep here pretty well stays in its lot about the old Smith School house, eating grass and treats.

Yet the other day, somebody left behind a sad old coonhound that hung around the front gate a good while. Now when that sheep saw it, it went flying up the farm road, bouncing along like crazy.

Now the old coonhound could have cared less about that sheep. He liked the left- over's from out fridge much better. It even ate up a lot of old stale bread I keep in there for toast. He or she, I did not look or notice, spent the rainy day under the church van and I guess eventually its hunter/owner must have picked it up.

It was a nice old coonhound and very appreciative of the scraps it was given. It probably had been chasing coons all night.

Now there are people, cuz, who are like those crazy sheep, crazy cows, who won't stay where God puts them.

There are thousands of missing children, who simply rebel against their parents, who run away, who won't listen to the one trying to keep them safe and healthy. Those who listen to the voice "on line" of a complete stranger who lures them away from home, never to be seen again. There are far too many missing children.

RJ
KENNEDY

They are like the "Captive Daughter of Zion" (Isaiah 52:2)" You were sold for nothing", but thankfully God goes on to say, "And without money you will be redeemed".

There are folk's cuz, who use their free time and money, not hunting coons, but lost children, and they hunt the evil people who steal away these children. Thank God for men and women who are brave! They are heroes! They are out there shutting down the wicked predators, and rescuing children.

Children who were either lured away on line by these snake or wolves in sheep's clothing or kidnapped, jerked up right off the street by these devils!

Train you kids, your grand kids, to defend themselves cuz. There's nothing like a swift hard kick to the side of the knee or groin, to slow a man down. Teach them not to talk to strangers, not to ever meet someone they "met on line".

These beautiful "dream boats" they think they are going to meet are usually creepy old men who have a lust for young girls, or someone just wanting to make some quick money selling them into the sex trade. Parents, grandparents, teach your children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews to never wander away from home to meet someone.

They are not the answer to your prayers. Parents make you home a happy safe place where children want to stay, where they feel loved and protected.

Of course, teach them to be responsible, to clean their rooms, help with the chores, help with the house and yard work, but make sure life is not all work and no play.

There are children who hate work and only want play, they never want to put their phones down or cut off the video games. My best answer-first, don't get your kid a smart phone! It usually only makes them dumber and lazier.

If you need to get in touch with them, get them a "granny flip phone" they do still make them. Throw out the violent video games, trash them and get the kids outside playing ball instead. The internet opens up a world of problems to children and people alike.

It rewires the brain, shortens the attention span. Many a good man has been lured into pornography on line and has lost their jobs, their marriages. Can you imagine having to explain to your wife and children why daddy has to move away and find another job, how embarrassing?

I have seen farms in this area, go to waste because the owner-caretaker, was too busy drinking beer and looking at porn! It consumed their life; the farms were trashed and left to grow up.

So cuz, just remember, teach your little one "don't be sheep that wanders astray" only to be killed by the wolves out there. Protect them, care for them.

Until Next week
RJ Kennedy

Adult education connection

Adult education plays a vital role in empowering some individuals who struggle with confidence to become effective self-advocates. Self-advocacy is the ability to understand one's needs, communi-cate them clearly, and take action to achieve personal goals. Through adult education programs, learners can gain the knowledge and skills necessary to speak up for themselves in educational, workplace, healthcare, and community settings.



One of the most significant benefits of adult education is the development of communication skills. Many adults return to education seeking opportunities to improve literacy, language proficiency, or professional skills. Once they become more comfortable expressing their thoughts and ideas as well as advocating for their needs and rights. Effective communication enables individuals to ask questions, seek assistance, and participate actively in decisions that affect their lives.

Adult education also promotes critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. Adult learners are encouraged to analyze information, evaluate options, and make informed decisions. These skills are essential for self-advocacy because they help individuals identify challenges, understand available resources, and determine the best course of action. Whether negotiating workplace accommoda-tions, accessing community services, or pursuing educational opportunities, informed decision-making strengthens a person's ability to advocate effectively.

In addition, adult education fosters self-confidence and independence. Many adults develop a high-er level of self-relianceto overcome barriers such as previous educational setbacks, financial diffi-culties, or limited opportunities. Successfully completing courses and achieving educational goals can increase self-esteem and reinforce the belief that they are capable of influencing their own fu-tures. This confidence often extends beyond the classroom and encourages learners to become more active participants in their families, workplaces, and communities.

Adult education serves as a powerful tool for developing self-advocacy skills. By enhancing com-munication, critical thinking, self-confidence, and knowledge of personal rights, adult education helps to empower individuals to take control of their lives and pursue their goals. As adult learners become stronger self-advocates, they are better prepared to contribute positively to their communi-ties and achieve greater personal and professional success.

For information on adult education classes in our area, please call Southwest Regional Adult Edu-cation at 276-889-5424.

Church, Women, Wonder and Why?

The National Council of Churches says 15,000 churches are expected to close this year and 100,000 more church-es are at risk of closing over the next few years. Their reasoning is because younger generations are not attending and operating costs have increased. They don't provide a source for this statistic. Lifeway Research says 4000 protestant churches closed in 2024 but that 3800 new ones were started.

It doesn't take a rocket scientist to see that American churches are in trouble. There are lots of buildings where on-ly a few attend and there are many with locked doors and for sale signs.

Everybody has an opinion on why this has and is happening and so do I.

When was the last time someone invited you to church? In the thirty years I have lived at my current residence, I have been invited to church by someone else one time. Two young ladies a few years ago knocked on my door and invited me to a new church start.

I couldn't believe it. I was so happy someone was out inviting people to church. Church people don't do this much anymore. They pay their pastor a few dollars and expect the pastor to do all that.

The average church is afraid of new people. If new people joined then they might want to participate. They might want to be involved in the church. Many small churches mainly want people to fill their seats and put money in the offering plate but after that keep your mouth be quiet and don't make suggestions.

Typically, churches stay small because a few families make sure that everything is about them and often will freeze out outsiders. One church member of a local church said not too long ago, "I've never seen anyone that our church couldn't run off."

Some churches are still biased and have a Middle Eastern men-

DR. GLENN
MOLLETTE

tality toward women. You know how Iran and some other countries treat their women.

Last week, the Southern Baptist Convention in Orlando Florida received a motion that was made by a convention leader to advance a constitutional amendment that would formally bar churches with women pastors from the de-nomination.

The amendment would tighten existing restrictions and require the exclusion of any church that acts to affirm, ap-point, or endorse a woman serving in the office or function of a pastor/elder/overseer and specifically prohibit women preaching to the assembled congregation. The motion passed but will have to be passed by two thirds of the messengers at next year's convention in order for it to change the convention's constitution.

I think it is sad that the SBC has so many insecure men who are terrified women will do it better. Such bias and prejudice only hamper the work of God. God can call and use whoever he chooses. It's not the job of men to beat women on their heads with the Bible and tell them to submit and to shut up.

Sadly, the issue is more cultural than scriptural. The Southern Baptists are the same ones who supported slavery when the convention was founded in 1845. That era was a sad and terrible time in the south. Those who continued to hang on to the idea and practice of slavery were extremely wrong. Many of those people were in the church.

One woman at a church said it best one time. She said, "Glenn, if the women have the leadership roles at the church, the men will stay home. We want our men and families in church so we go along with them being in charge." I thought, "Truer words have never been spoken. However, her philosophy doesn't work for everyone.

We can all point to places in the Bible and say, the Bible says. So, here is what the Bible says. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Galatians 3:28. In God's eyes we are all equal.

If some of this is happening in your church then you don't have to wonder why your church is declining.

It Was Time for Me to Sit Down



DEBBIE GIBSON

As I rounded the corner, escorted by my husband, I know I heard an audible gasp. More than a gasp, it was a deep soulful sob of sort, the kind that happens to a mother on the day her baby boy gets married. My legs kept moving, but my heart stood still. Within sixty seconds, I relived his birth, his babyhood, his young years, his launch into adulthood, and I marveled how quickly we had arrived at this moment. It was me who'd made the sound. I secretly hoped no one had heard me.

How is it that thirty-two years can speed compress itself in a simple walk down the aisle? I told myself to get a grip, keep walking, head up, shoulders squared, onward. But my thoughts were going backwards in time. Back to the day of his arrival. Back to his first day of school. Back to his first fish. Back to his first deer. Back, and back, and back I went. When I took my seat, the replays stopped. God must have known, I needed to be present that day, for this love. Because that is what good mothers do.

We were on top of a mountain in Sevierville. All the guest arrived by shuttle. The sun beamed down on us. The skies were clear and the color of periwinkle blue. Birdsong filled the air. The cross at the front of the venue highlighted everything I know to be real. This was a day that God had made. I rejoiced and was glad in it.

Every detail had been handled by the bride and groom. The colors were soft and creamy. The men wore custom-made suits, the bridesmaids wore soft blue. Food was abundant. Fans had been handed out to abate the heat. Musicians played. Hearts sung. The two of them married on what could only be called the most beautiful day.

During the mother-son dance, I held on to him, and again, I heard that audible gasp as Eva Cassidy sang " Who Knows Where the Time Goes?" Her melodic voice filled the dining room with these words:

"Across the evening sky, all the birds are leaving
But how can they know it's time for them to go?
Before the winter fire, I will still be dreaming
I have no thought of time
For who knows where the time goes?
Who knows where the time goes?
Sad, deserted shore, your fickle friends are leaving
Ah, but then you know it's time for them to go
But I will still be here, I have no thought of leaving
I do not count the time
For who knows where the time goes?
Who knows where the time goes?
And I am not alone while my love is near me
I know it will be so until it's time to go
So come the storms of winter and then the birds in spring again
I have no fear of time
For who knows how my love grows?
And who knows where the time goes?"

And then, an unorchestrated moment occurred. I hadn't planned it. They hadn't planned it. At the end of the song, I took my son's hand and placed it in his new bride's hand. For in that moment in time, I remembered that "a man shall leave his mother and father, and cleave to his wife, and they shall become one flesh." I had done my job joyfully and with everything within me. It was time for me to sit down.

"Ah, but then you know, it's time for them to go…"

Fly high, Devin and Isaac! March through the seasons of love: the spring, the summer, the fall, and the winter. May you always multiply one another's joy and divide any sorrow that may happen to find you. I love you both!

Happenings of the Drill Senior Citizens

By JANIE THOMAS

May 22, 2026, found the door to the Drill Community Building open and us Drill Senior Citizens gathering for another meeting. Glad to be back together. We had to cancel our last meeting due to the county workers doing some painting and cleaning for our community building. A big thank you to all the workers who worked to make our meeting place all bright and clean.

Betty Sue Hess called the meeting to order. She read the prayer requests, then prayed over them. We thought that Rev, Chester Ball and Becky were not going to be at our meeting today, so Gary Thomas did the devotions, He read from the Bible, Luke Chapter 24, Verses 46 and 47. Jesus died on the Cross and rose on the third day for our sins. A debt we can never repay. Brother Chester and Becky got there just as Gary was finishing devotions.

After devotions Betty Sue called the roll. We had 34 members and one visitor present today. We then stood and made our pledge of allegiance to our flag. I then gave the financial report. We did our spring tote raffe today and Greg Noe was the winner of the tote.

Barbara Baldwin read the names of our birthday members for May and Betsy Newton led everyone in singing "Happy Birthday" to them. Tommy Meade couldn't be with us today, so Betsy Newton led everyone in singing; "God Bless America" and "As I Have Loved You". Then Greg Noe and Joyce Baldwin sang; "Glorious Day", and "Goodness of God".

Our menu today was potluck. Betsy Newton asked the blessing over the food to-day. The tables were full of good home-made dishes; we even had some great chicken salad today. As always, the dessert counters were full of good desserts to make even the strongest dieter tempted.

After lunch was over and clean up was complete, it was bingo time! Don Hess started giving out the bingo cards, but quit before he got finished, so John Combs finished giving them out then he helped Gary Thomas bring in the bingo prizes. Betty Sue started the fun by calling the first several games, then I finished so she could play her card. No one had the date or their birthday on their card today.

These lucky winners won one game each: Inez Sparks, Bruce Baldwin. Don Hess, Thelma Massie, Frank Dye, Brenda Jackson, Joyce Baldwin, John Combs, James Dotson, Becky Ball, Linda Wilson, & Johnny Brown. These Big Winners won two games each: Greg Noe, Ron Jackson, Kathy Noe, Shelia Hale, Freda Sweeney, and Norman Wilson. We really enjoy our bingo playing.

Our next meeting is scheduled for June 12 beginning at 11 a.m. Our Menu will be hotdogs and banana splits. Everyone welcome! Come be with us, we will make you smile.

June 12th was the latest meeting of the Drill Senior Citizens. I would like to apologize as our article from our May 22nd meeting was not in the paper again. I sure hope the new owners do better. So that is the reason I left the May 22nd meeting happenings in the report,

Betty Sue Hess called our meeting to order and read the prayer requests. Tommy Meade opened the devotions with prayer, then Gary Thomas read Psalms chapter 145. We need to teach our children about Jesus. They are our church of to-mor-row.

After devotions Betty Sue called the roll. We had 32 members present and four visitors. We stood and made our pledge of allegiance to our flag. I then gave the financial report.

Our Singers today were Joyce Baldwin, Janet Combs, Linda Wilson, Betsy New-ton, and Tommy Meade. Joyce, Janet, Linda and Tommy sang: "Sweet By and By"; "Jesus Loves Me"; and "Glorious Day". Then Betsy Newton led everyone in singing "Happy Birthday" to our June birthdays. She then led everyone in singing "God Bless America" and she sang "As I Have Loved You".

Our menu today was hotdogs. Betsy Newton asked the Blessing over our food. The tables were full of hotdogs, home-made chili, many dishes of baked beans, coleslaw, potato salad and I think I even saw a dish of cabbage casserole. The dessert counter had a special treat today, ice cream, bananas and all kinds of toppings to make a banana split to your liking.

After everyone was full of good food and the dishes were done and tables cleaned it was bingo time again. We like playing bingo almost as much as we like to eat. John Combs gave out the bingo cards and then he and Don Hess brought the bingo prizes in. Betty Sue Hess started the fun by calling the numbers first then I fin-ished up so she could play. Our winners today were Linda Wilson had her birth-day on her card. These winners won one game each: David Compton, Joyce Baldwin, Shelia Hale, Ella Mae Peck, Kaitlyn Wilson, Ron Jackson, and Chester Ball. These lucky winners won two games each: Linda Wilson, Tommy Meade, Nancy Childress, and Don Hess.

Our next meeting is June 26, and our menu is potluck. So fix your favorite dish and come spend the day with us. Everyone welcome!

Remember to pray for one and another. When prayers go up, blessings come down!

LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC OF AN APPLICATIONBY KENTUCKY UTILITIES COMPANY D/B/A OLD DOMINION POWER COMPANY FOR AN ADJUSTMENT OF ELECTRIC BASE RATES CASE NO. PUR-2026-00051

On April 30, 2026, Kentucky Utilities Company d/b/a Old Dominion Power Company ("KU/ODP" or "Company")filed an application ("Application") with the State Corporation Commission ("Commission") requesting authority to adjust its electric base rates pursuant to Chapter 10 of Title 56 of the Code of Virginia ("Code") and the Commission's Rules Governing Utility Rate Applications and Annual Informational Filings of Investor-Owned Electric Utilities, 20 VAC 5-204-5 *et seq*.

KU/ODP seeks an increase in base rates to produce an increase in revenues in the amount of approximately $19 million, which is a 22.43% increase in its total operating revenues, including fuel. The Company indicates that this rate request is based on a 10.95% return on common equity. Additionally, KU/ODP proposes to increase its basic service charge for residential service. Specifically, for residential customers, the Company proposes a basic service charge of $15.00 per month, which is a $3.00 increase to the Company's current $12.00 per month basic service charge for residential service. In addition, the Company is proposing an increase in the energy charge from the current level of $0.11664 per kilowatt hour ("kWh") to $0.15030 per kWh.

If KU/ODP's proposed rate increase is approved, the impact on customer bills would depend on the customer's rate schedule and usage. According to the Company, the proposed increase would raise the monthly bill of a residential customer using 1,000 kWh per month by $36.66, from $156.46 to $193.12, an increase of 23.43%.

The Application contains proposed revisions to the Company's tariffs, including, but not limited to, changes to the Company's schedules on Power Service, Residential Time-of-Day-Demand, Residential Time-of-Day-Energy, General Service Time-of-Day-Demand, General Service Time-of-Day-Energy, Outdoor Sports Lighting Service, and Special Charges, and changes to the Company's Riders for Excess Facilities and Intermittent Loads. KU/ODP proposes adding a new Extremely High Load Factor standard rate schedule to apply to customers with large demands and very high load factors. The Company also proposes to implement a prepay program for its eligible residential customers, which the Company asserts is in accordance with the notice and disconnection requirements of the Code.

The Application also includes a request pursuant to 5 VAC 5-20-100 C of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure, 5 VAC 5-20-10 et seq. ("Rules of Practice"), for declaratory relief. KU/ODP seeks such relief concerning its proposal to reclassify certain assets-its 69 kilovolt ("kV") through and including its 161 kV assets-as transmission assets for inclusion in the Company's Federal Energy Regulatory Commission transmission formula rates under the Open Access Transmission Tariff.

The Commission has suspended implementation of the proposed revisions to the Company's rates, tolls, charges, rules, and regulations until a final order is issued in this proceeding.

Interested persons are encouraged to review the Company's Application and supporting documents in full for additional details.

TAKE NOTICE that the Commission may approve revenues and adopt rates, fees, charges, tariff revisions, and terms and conditions of service that differ from those appearing in the Company's Application and supporting documents and may apportion revenues among customer classes and/or design rates in a manner differing from that shown in the Company's Application and supporting documents.

The Commission entered an Order for Notice and Hearing that, among other things, scheduled public hearings on KU/ODP's Application.

The Commission schedules a telephonic portion of the hearing for the receipt of testimony from public witnesses on the Application, as follows:

(a) The portion of the hearing for the receipt of testimony from public witnesses on the Application shall be convened telephonically at 10 a.m. on November 12, 2026.

(b) To promote fairness for all public witnesses, each witness will be allotted five minutes to provide testimony.

(c) On or before November 5, 2026, any person desiring to offer testimony as a public witness shall provide required contact information to the Commission. This information may be provided to the Commission: (i) by filling out a form on the Commission's website at scc.virginia.gov/case-information/webcasting: or (ii) by calling (804) 371-9141.

(d) This public witness hearing will be webcast a scc.virginia.gov/case-information/webcasting.

On November 12, 2026 at 10 a.m., or at the conclusion of the public witness portion of the hearing, whichever is later, in the Commission's second floor courtroom located in the Tyler Building, 1300 East Main Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219, the Hearing Examiner will convene a hearing to receive testimony and evidence related to the Application from the Company, any respondents, and the Commission's Staff.

To promote administrative efficiency and timely service of filings upon participants, the Commission has directed the electronic filing of testimony and pleadings, unless they contain confidential information, and required electronic service on parties to this proceeding.

An electronic copy of the public version of the Company's Application may be obtained by submitting a written request to counsel for the Company: Mary Ellen Wimberly, Esquire, Stoll Keenan Ogden PLLC, 500 West Jefferson Street, Suite 2000, Louisville, Kentucky 40202-2828, or MaryEllen.Wimberly@skofirm.com. Interested persons also may download unofficial copies from the Commission's website: scc.virginia.gov/case-information.

On or before November 5, 2026, any interested person may submit comments on the Application electronically by following the instructions on the Commission's website: scc.virginia.gov/case-information/submit-public-comments. Those unable, as a practical matter, to submit comments electronically may file such comments by U.S. mail to the Clerk of the State Corporation Commission, c/o Document Control Center, P.O. Box 2118, Richmond, Virginia 23218-2118. All comments shall refer to Case No. PUR-2026-00051.

On or before August 3, 2026, any person or entity wishing to participate as a respondent in this proceeding must do so by filing a notice of participation with the Clerk of the Commission at: scc.virginia.gov/clk/efiling. Those unable, as a practical matter, to file a notice of participation electronically may file such notice by U.S. mail to the Clerk of the Commission at the address listed above. Such notice of participation shall include the email addresses of such parties and their counsel. A copy of the notice of participation as a respondent also must be served electronically on counsel to the Company, any other respondents, and the Commission's Staff. Pursuant to 5 VAC 5-20-80 B, *Participation as a respondent*, of the Commission's Rules of Practice, any notice of participation shall set forth: (i) a precise statement of the interest of the respondent; (ii) a statement of the specific action sought to the extent then known; and (iii) the factual and legal basis for the action. Any notice of participation filed by a person not represented by counsel shall also set forth why the filer's positions in this matter are not adequately represented by another party to this proceeding and cannot be expressed through written or oral public comments as provided for in this proceeding. Any organization, corporation, or government body participating as a respondent must be represented by counsel as required by 5 VAC 5-20-30, *Counsel*, of the Rules of Practice. All filings shall refer to Case No. PUR-2026-00051.

On or before September 1, 2026, each respondent may file with the Clerk of the Commission at scc.virginia.gov/clk/efiling any testimony and exhibits by which the respondent expects to establish its case. Any respondent unable, as a practical matter, to file testimony and exhibits electronically may file such by U.S. mail to the Clerk of the Commission at the address listed above. Each witness's testimony shall include a summary not to exceed one page. All testimony and exhibits shall be served electronically on the Company, any other respondents, and the Commission's Staff. In all filings, respondents shall comply with the Commission's Rules of Practice, as modified herein, including 5 V AC 5-20-140, Filing and service, and 5 V AC 5-20-240, *Prepared testimony and exhibits*. All filings shall refer to Case No. PUR-2026-00051.

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

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

KENTUCKY UTILITIES COMPANY D/B/A OLD DOMINION POWER COMPANY



Amid statewide drought conditions, data centers face same restrictions as all water customers

By SHANNON HECKT
Virginia Mercury

About one-third of the state of Virginia is under extreme drought conditions, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor, and Gov. Abigail Spanberger is urging citizens to conserve water. So when local water authorities implement restrictions on water use, are there specific carve outs and rules for data centers, which use hundreds of thousands of gallons of water to cool their computer systems?

No. Across multiple localities, they're treated the same as all other commercial, industrial and residential customers, state and local officials revealed.

The Department of Environmental Quality is responsible for permitting the groundwater withdrawal for public water authorities. Once that permit is granted it is up to each authority to manage their water use and limit customers as needed, based on the weather conditions.

"Any of the permittees that are withdrawing are very cognizant of what they're pulling out," Weedon Cloe, manager of the Office of Water Supply at DEQ, said. "They have the limits and those limits are baked in during specific times of the year to ensure that the resource is not depleted."

There are provisions in the drought assessment and response plan that allow DEQ's director to alter those permits in extreme circumstances. Cloe said that the department is reviewing those procedures, since the state is experiencing the worst drought they've seen in decades.

Virginia hasn't been this dry since 2002, when the extreme conditions triggered new standards.

"The entire water supply program came (from) that drought. It was severe.

It was like a huge swath through the center of the state running north south," Cloe said.

There are three main stages of drought that are declared by DEQ, which help localities decide on what water restrictions to implement.

Under a drought watch, the state agency recommends localities minimize nonessential water use and to get a contingency plan in place.

In the drought warning category, officials recommend local leaders to start voluntary water restrictions and aggressively identify any leaks or repairs needed.

Once a drought emergency is declared, mandatory restrictions are put in place and if water customers don't curb inessential water like irrigation, washing paved surfaces, or filling up pools, they could be fined.

Some places, like Henrico County, have not needed to venture into the mandatory category for their customers in two decades.

Bentley Chan, the director of Henrico's department of public utilities, said that of the eleven data centers in the county, only one makes it into the list of their top ten water users. Apartment complexes and hospitals are the biggest water consumers there, and they don't have specific usage rules in times of drought.

"It's not just on the residential customers (to restrict water use) and you'll find that a lot of the industrial users have extraneous uses, such as irrigation, additional cleaning, and things of that nature," Chan said. "And we do ask everybody to be a part of the mandatory restrictions … to preserve the flow in the James River."

Similar policies are used in Loudoun and Fairfax counties that house over 200 data centers combined. In Fairfax, the county follows guidance from the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments that requires all customers to implement reductions under the mandatory orders.

In Norfolk, there are no data centers online at this time that use water from their utilities, according to a utility representative. The representative went on to state that since they get their water from multiple sources, it is rare to have to implement restrictions.

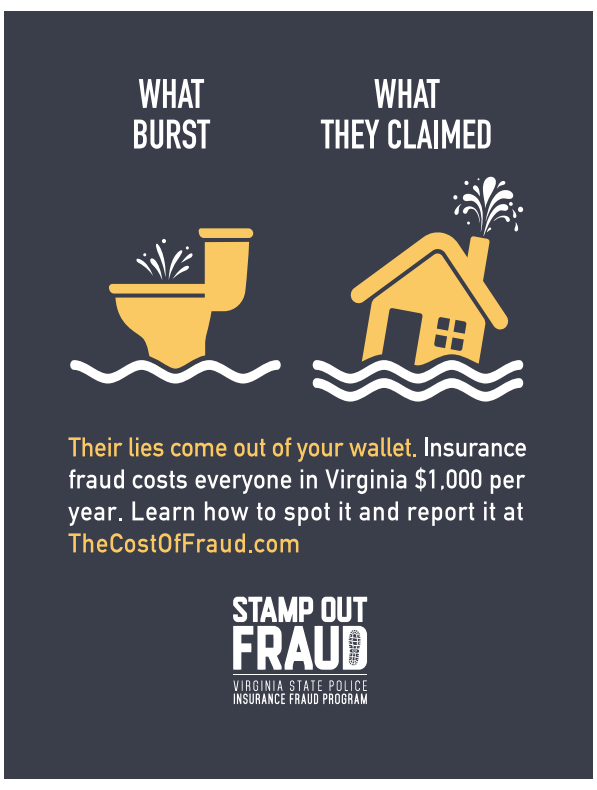
"If there comes such a time (of data centers), the department would analyze the capacity versus the needs and factor in all conditions to ensure they're able to adequately provide for all customers," the representative said in a statement.

Western Virginia Water Authority provides water to 69,000 customers in the Roanoke area, where there are also no data centers online yet. A representative told the Mercury that they are considering updating their policies once a data center is built – with one from Google expected to begin taking in water in 2028 that will be authorized to use up to 8 million gallons of water per day.

Some localities have started mandatory restrictions heading into the official start of summer with precipitation totals for the rain year, which begins in October, to be about eight inches short.











Pioneers host basketball summer league camp at Mecca

By ANTHONY STEVENS
anthony@virginiamediainc.com

LEBANON, Va., (June 17, 2026) – There's no better time to prepare for basketball than camps in the summer. Baseball is over, so you can get on the hardwood. Seven teams were on hand for action on Wednesday and Thursday at the Mecca. Rural Retreat, Patrick Henry, Richlands, Tazewell, Holston, and Honaker joined the host team.

The Pioneers began adjusting to life without two-time Lebanon News Player of the Year Mike Recce.

"When we were getting beat up on the glass, I said we didn't have Mike down there gobbling up rebounds," Lebanon coach Scotty Boyd said. "He controlled the paint."

It has been a busy summer for Lebanon. They played in Graham's summer league, attended UVa-Wise team camp, and played at Eastside High School. They have played ten to twelve games.

SEE SUMMER LEAGUE | 3B



ANTHONY STEVENS | Lebanon News

Dawson Rasnake drives on the baseline against a Holston defender.



ANTHONY STEVENS | Lebanon News

Honaker's Silas Harris goes around a screen for a shot in the corner.

Tigers with good learning session at Lebanon's summer camp

By ANTHONY STEVENS
anthony@virginiamediainc.com

LEBANON, Va., (June 17, 2026) – The Tigers are finding their footing as veteran mentor Aaron Williams takes over the boys' basketball program. They were in attendance at Charles C. Long Gymnasium on Wednesday and Thursday for Lebanon's camp.

Honaker opened up against Hogoheegee District rival Holston. The Tigers pulled away for a 47-35 triumph.

"I see a lot of individual ability," stated Williams. "We have some good athletes. We're trying to get better and improve in two or three areas each time we play. In the first game against Holston, I thought Colton Lowe's on-ball defense got our offense started. Colton generated about two or three turnovers, which led to a couple of easy buckets. We went from being down a couple to be-ing up three or four, and then we started making shots. We talked about how our defense can get our offense started."

The Cavaliers kept it close in the first half.

"We're not in basketball shape," said Holston coach Chad Bailey. "Brady (Bailey) is hurt. He sprained his AC joint, so we're trying to learn to play without him. I thought it was good. I think we just ran out of gas. That's why we do all the conditioning we do in the regular season. But the kids played hard."

Holston returns a veteran team. They will be one of the most experienced teams in the district.

"I lost the foreign exchange student and Jo Norman, and that's it," noted Bailey. "I'll have six seniors this upcoming season. It makes me look forward to this year.

"There will be a lot of parity in the Hogoheegee. It will still be a strong district, but anyone can beat anyone on any given night, and that wasn't the case last year."

Patrick Henry ran away with the district title last season. Chilhowie finished well ahead of every-one else for second place.

The Tigers fell to Tazewell in their second game in the camp. It appeared they ran out of steam against the Bulldogs in back-to-back games for

SEE SUMMER CAMP | 3B



ANTHONY STEVENS | Lebanon News

Parker Lowe with a move in the paint against Tazewell for the Tigers.

FOOTBALL

Emory & Henry Football Announces 2026 Schedule

EMORY, Va. – The Emory & Henry University Football Team has released its schedule for the upcoming 2026 season. Head Football Coach Quintin Hunter will lead the Wasps onto the field for his third season after posting an 8-3 record in 2025.

E&H opens the season on Thursday, August 27, visiting perennial national power Valdosta State University. The Blazers are four-time national champions at the Division II level and give the Wasps a chance to compete on the national stage on the first night of competition for all levels of college football.

The Wasps are back on the road the following Saturday, September 5, when they renew the Crooked Road Rivalry with former Old Dominion Athletic Conference rival Ferrum College. This will be the first meeting between the two programs since the 2021 season, when E&H defeated the Panthers 41-23. It will also be the first matchup of the two schools since both made the transition to the Division II ranks. Emory & Henry leads the all-time series 27-12.

Emory & Henry opens up its home slate on Saturday, September 12 when the Wasps welcome Tusculum Univer-sity to Fred Selfe Stadium. E&H has defeated TU in three straight seasons.

On Saturday, September 19, E&H travels to take on Catawba College, before returning home on September 26 to host defending SAC champion and National semifinalist Newberry College (1 p.m.).

A trip to the Palmetto State on Saturday, October 3 to take on Anderson (S.C.) University awaits E&H before re-turning home on Saturday, October 10 to face Mars Hill University on Homecoming Weekend.

E&H travels to Carson-Newman University on Saturday, October 17 to face the Eagles before being off on Satur-day, October 24 for their scheduled bye week.

Emory & Henry will host Lenoir-Rhyne University on Saturday, October 31 (1 p.m.), before closing out the sea-son's road schedule at Wingate University on Saturday, November 7. The Wasps will celebrate Senior Day and close out the regular season against the University of Virginia's College at Wise for Southwest Virginia Bowl IX.

Game times for this season are tentative and subject to change based on travel.

2026 Emory & Henry Football Schedule

Aug.	2	Valdosta State	Away
Sep.	5	Ferrum	Away
	12	Tusculum*	Home
	19	Catawba*	Away
	26	Newberry*	Home
Oct.	3	Anderson*	Away
	10	Mars Hill*	Home
	17	Carson-Newman*	Away
	24	Bye	
	31	Lenoir-Rhyne*	Home
Nov.	7	Wingate*	Away
	14	UVA-Wise*	Home

* denotes SAC games

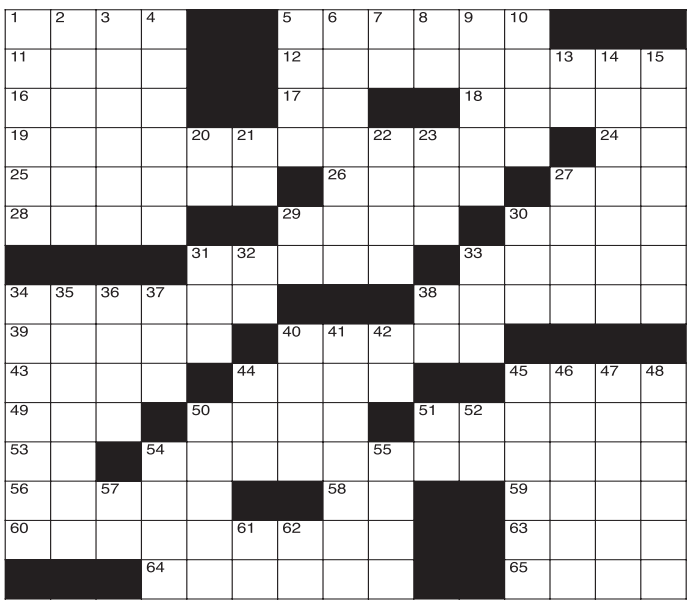
FATHER'S DAY FUN WORD SEARCH

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

Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally, and backwards.

WORDS

APPRECIATION
BARBECUE
BRAVERY
CELEBRATION
COACH
DAY
DEDICATION
DEVOTION
FAMILY
FATHERHOOD
FATHERS
FISHING
GENEALOGY
GENEROSITY
GRILLING
GUIDANCE
HERITAGE
KINDNESS
LEGACY
MENTORSHIP
PATERNITY
RELATED
RELIABILITY
RESPECT
TRADITION
TRIBUTE
WISDOM
WORDS



CLUES ACROSS

1. Nocturnal S. American rodent
5. Requesting
11. Give temporarily
12. Excitedness
16. Armed Forces branch
17. Actor Harris
18. Middle Eastern capital
19. Air hostesses
24. Partner to "Pa"
25. Percussion instrument
26. Popular computers
27. Reduce light
28. Asian mountain range
29. Every one of two or more
30. Absence of difficulty
31. A public announcement of a proposed marriage
33. Whittles
34. Impact
38. Serviceman
39. A French river
40. Prehistoric people
43. Messenger ribonucleic acid
44. __ Clapton, musician
45. Ancient Greek sophist
49. Largest English dictionary (abbr.)
50. Singer Hansard
51. A way to disentangle
53. Atomic #93
54. Manifesting approval
56. Indigo bush
58. Former AL MVP Vaughn
59. Off-Broadway theater award
60. Fencers
63. Small Eurasian deer (pl.)
64. Relating to passerine birds
65. Arrange systematically

CLUES DOWN

1. Colorless fluid
2. Of a main artery
3. Photographer's tool
4. Blues Traveler hit "But __"
5. Grew older
6. Not the leader
7. __ Lang (country singer)
8. A driver's license is one
9. Nests of pheasants
10. Wildebeests
13. Equal to one quintillion bytes
14. Japanese three-stringed lute
15. Type of cat
20. It cools your home
21. The ancient Egyptian sun god
22. Pouches
23. German trigraph
27. Form of Persian
29. Measurement unit
30. Body part
31. Bridge building degree
32. Indicates position
33. Political action committee
34. Snack food
35. Front part of a quadruped
36. Locate
37. Pitching statistic
38. __, myself and I
40. City in Utah
41. They play in the trenches
42. "Can't Touch This" rapper __ Hammer
44. Type of tree
45. Performers
46. Slang for mistake
47. More open
48. Most slick
50. Needles
51. University of Dayton
52. Atomic #11
54. Large fish of the mackerel family
55. Not any
57. __ and behold
61. Popular sports highlight show (abbr.)
62. "The Great Lakes State"

PUZZLE SOLUTION

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

SUDOKU

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

Level: Intermediate

WORD SCRAMBLE

Rearrange the letters to spell something pertaining to Father's Day.

R D R E A W

Answer: Reward

GUESS WHO?

I am a singer born on June 22, 1953 in New York. I embraced bright hair and edgy clothing during my teen years. That paved the way for my style throughout much of my musical career. In addition to pop music, I created the soundtrack to a Broadway show and changed the history of World Wrestling Entertainment.

Answer: Cyndi Lauper

CRYPTO FUN

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

Solve the code to discover words related to the pollinators.
Each number corresponds to a letter.
(Hint: 26 = O)

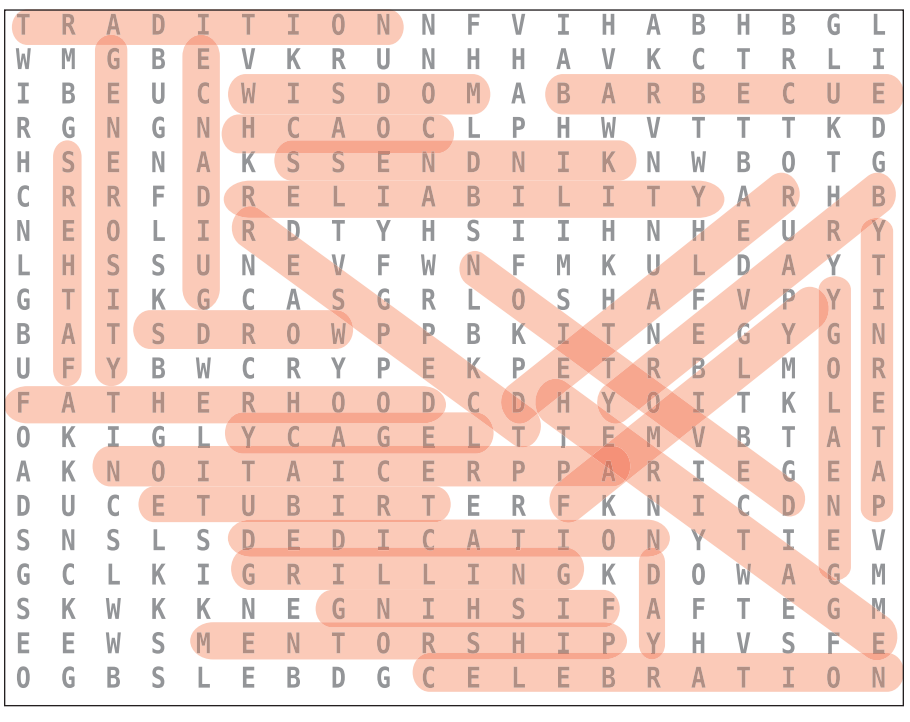
A. 6 26 4 4 13 17 9 7 26 19
Clue: Carries pollen

B. 11 4 26 25 16 19
Clue: Contains petals

C. 22 19 26 25 7 23
Clue: Getting bigger

D. 24 4 26 26 5 8
Clue: Flowering

Answers: A. pollinator B. flower C. growth D. blooms



SUDOKU SOLUTION

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

Horoscopes

ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20

Aries, physical activity can boost your mood and clear your mind for some big decisions that are ahead this week. Tackle some larger projects.

TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21

Indulge in simple pleasures this week, Taurus. They will lead you to the happiness you deserve. You may discover a new favorite recipe or cozy nook to hang out.

GEMINI – May 22/Jun 21

Networking may feel less like a chore and more like a party this week, Gemini. A chance encounter could open a door to an excellent opportunity.

CANCER – Jun 22/Jul 22

Cancer, right now your home is filled with laughter and shared memories. It's a great week to host a small gathering or a movie night with close friends to share all the good vibes.

LEO – Jul 23/Aug 23

Leo, today you are a beacon of light and a source of inspiration. Use your unique position as a leader to spread positivity and watch good fortune multiply.

VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22

Virgo, you are often a master of finding practical solutions to tricky problems both at work and at home. Your reliable nature is a great gift to those around you.

LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23

Libra, some diplomacy this week can help you navigate a complex situation with ease. Find moments for mindful meditation so you can create a calm atmosphere wherever you go.

SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22

If you are brave enough to voice it, a secret wish just might come true, Scorpio. After some difficult days, you can use a bit of magic and mystery to change your perspective.

SAGITTARIUS – Nov 23/Dec 21

You're definitely a glass-half-full kind of person, Sagittarius. This optimism will open doors to a new horizon. A sudden urge to learn something new leads to an opportunity.

CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20

Discipline will be rewarded with a measurable success that can feel very uplifting, Capricorn. Your hard work is finally getting the recognition it deserves.

AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Feb 18

Be your most authentic self this week and watch how it attracts those you want in your circle, Aquarius. A weird coincidence may lead to a funny situation.

PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20

Pisces, calmer waters ahead allow you to reflect on yourself and recharge your emotional batteries. You may emerge at the end of the week centered and ready for anything.

FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

JUNE 21
Lana Del Rey, Singer (41)

JUNE 22
Meryl Streep, Actress (77)

JUNE 23
Jason Mraz, Singer (49)

JUNE 24
Minka Kelly, Actress (46)

JUNE 25
Benson Boone, Singer (24)

JUNE 26
Jacob Elordi, Actor (29)

JUNE 27
H.E.R., Singer (29)

DRAKE WHITE

FROM PAGE 1B

mances by The Grascals, The Kody Norris Show and Little Texas.

Joining White on June 13 were On the Border, Elvie Shane, and Channing Wil-son. Elvie Shane was a late substitution for Tyler Reese Tritt who was unable to the trip to Russell County.

Perhaps the biggest ovation of the festival occurred when the Lebanon High School Pioneers baseball team arrived back home just before White's perfor-mance, with yet another Virginia High School League state championship trophy proudly on display.



Some of the most coveted seats on Cedar Fest were in the grass and shade at near-by Lebanon Middle School.



Cedar Fest is always a good time to catch up with friends.



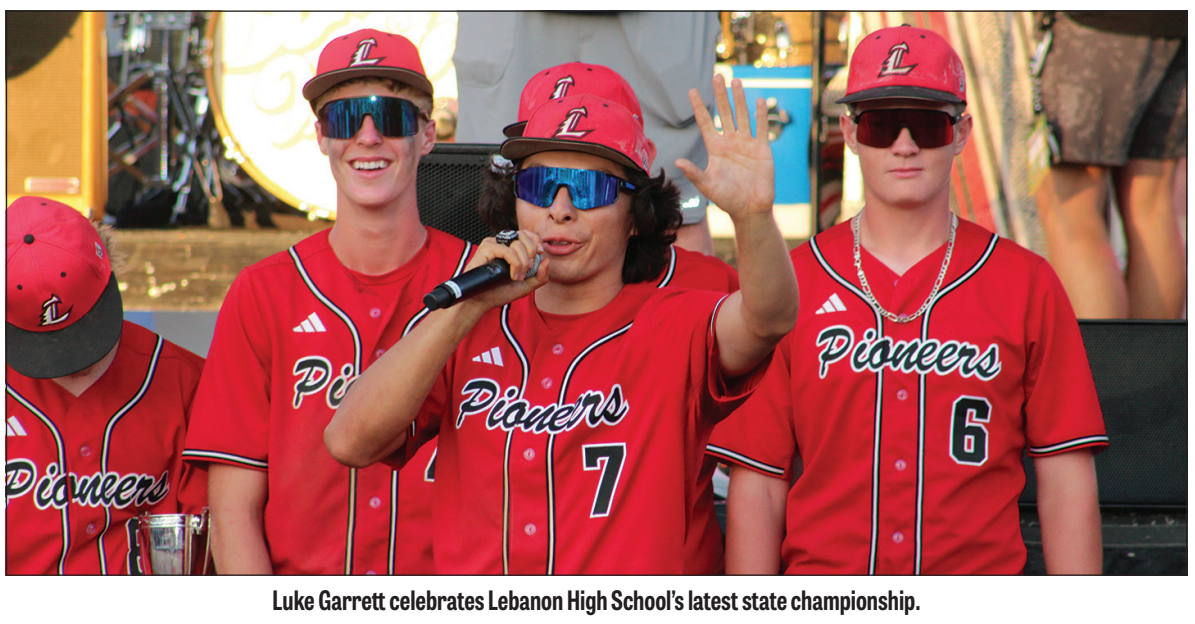
Plenty of food trucks were on hand for the two-day festival.



Lebanon Town Councilman Elijah Leonard enjoying Saturday's portion of Cedar Fest.



A look at the crowd at the seventh annual Cedar Fest



Luke Garrett celebrates Lebanon High School's latest state championship.

SUMMER LEAGUE

FROM PAGE 1B



ANTHONY STEVENS | Lebanon News

Caden Glass goes to the hoop for Lebanon against the Cavaliers.

"I've been very happy," Boyd stated. "It's been great for the young guys. Baseball made a great run and won a state title, so we've been missing a couple of our key guys. The young guys have gotten more development since they've had to be thrown in and play in some big spots. They've had to do a lot more without them here, so it's been good for them."

The Pioneers opened the camp with easy wins over Patrick Henry and Rural Retreat.

They faced a much stiffer test in the final game against Holston, coming from behind to win 59-55.

"We shot the ball well early," Boyd said. "We wanted to be in a tough game like this and give the young guys a taste of it."

The Cavs led most of the way. They will be a formidable opponent, with most of their roster returning, including four starters.

"Our objective here is to get better," Holston coach Chad Bailey said. "Especially against a good Lebanon team. It was our second game, and I was afraid all the 3s Lebanon was going to hit would catch up with us. We were dragging; we just didn't have the legs to play man defense. I'm awfully proud of these boys."

It was a good test for the Pioneers.

"Holston is physical. They had a lot of size on us," remarked Boyd. "We're small right now without Layne Jessee. We miss him. I didn't think Holston would be able to stay in the zone. We have a lot of shooters, but they stayed in it, controlled the glass, and outrebounded us most of the game. We were fortunate to make some shots late and win."

SUMMER CAMP

FROM PAGE 1B



ANTHONY STEVENS | Lebanon News

Colton Lowe (12) drives inside for a layup against the Bulldogs.

Honaker.

"I saw our body language turn defeated," declared Williams. "As we got down, it went from bad to worse, and we talked about that. Normally, I'd call some time-outs and give them some reminders, but we have to play through those situations and get mentally tougher."

Williams is trying to become familiar with his team, which is challenging due to the many activities happening during summer.

"It's preliminary. We're just trying to get to know each other a bit," Williams said. "Get a feel for what we're going to be doing. We want to understand the urgency and, when we get together next season, learn to make the most of every minute in practice. There's no magic wand. It's just about building the right habits and getting better each day. There's a lot of promise in this team."

Honaker will play about 10 games this summer and has had a few open gyms and practices.

"I see some individual play that I like," Williams stated. "We're going to have to get better at organ-ization, making decisions, and building the right habits. But I see some individual talent that can't be coached, such as jumping ability, floor vision, and timing on passes. I see a lot of promise in this team. As we get together next season, I'll have a better idea of what we're capable of. It's good for us to just play at this point."

Williams has hit the ground running after being named coach of the Tigers in April. He is getting some things accomplished in the off-season.

"We're just trying to build daily habits," Williams stated. "How to approach practice, have the right spirit, and hustle. You don't get to your hopes and dreams; you fall to whatever your training is. So we have to build it day by day, with the right approach and precision. In basketball, you're coaching on the run, so we're building our dictionary of what words mean and how they carry over to the court."

POLICE OFFICER

FROM PAGE 1B

wood Fire and Rescue did have a member with minor injuries as well. The member is on the way to a local emer-gency department for evaluation. The member is stable at this time and is ex-pected to fully recover."

The names of the St. Paul officer and the fire and rescue member were not re-leased.

According to officials, the officer was attempting to make an arrest when a scuffle broke out.

Police have charged James Uzzell with driving under the influence, obstruction of justice, possession of a firearm by a felon and assaulting a law enforcement offi-cial.

A second man, Roger Davis, has been charged with obstruction of justice and pub-lic intoxication.

On June 18, St. Paul officials issued a press release that the injured officer was re-leased from the hospital earlier that day. "The officer is doing well and remains in good spirits as recovery continues," the press release stated.

Town officials also took steps to address confusion and rumors regarding the inci-dent.

"While we cannot discuss specific details due to the ongoing investigation, we can confirm that there was no shooting and no shots were fired during the incident," the press release stated. "The St. Paul Police Depart-ment utilizes the BolaWrap device, a less-lethal tool designed to assist officers in safely taking individuals into custody. When deployed, the device uses a small blank cartridge to propel a re-straint cord and produc-es a loud sound that can be similar to gunfire. It is possible that this sound contributed to reports of shots being fired."

The press released concluded by stating, "We would like to extend our sincere ap-preciation to everyone who reached out with kind words, prayers, and sup-port. The outpouring of concern from our community has been truly appreciated by the officer, their family, and our public safety personnel. Thank you for your contin-ued support of the men and women who serve and protect our community."

Livestock producers eligible for drought assistance

By SHAWN STREET
shawn@virginiamediainc.com

Livestock producers in Russell County are eligible for drought assistance.

The United States Department of Agriculture has technical and financial assistance available to help farmers and livestock producers recover from recent drought conditions.

Farmers may sign up at the Farm Service Agency in Lebanon.

"We know current drought conditions are adversely impacting crops, land, water supplies and livestock, creating financial and emotional strain for the farmers and ranchers we serve," said Farm Production and Conservation Under Secretary Richard Fordyce. "I encourage producers to stay in close contact with their local USDA Service Center to report losses and damages and learn more about the many program options we have available to assist them in building drought resiliency and navi-gating drought recovery."

Livestock producers who suffered grazing losses for covered livestock due to drought on privately owned or cash leased land may be eligible for the 2026 Livestock Forage Disaster Program.

To participate in LFP, producers must own, cash or share lease, or contract grow eligible livestock; provide pasture or grazing land to eligible livestock on the begin-ning date of the qualifying drought; and certify that they suffered a grazing loss due to drought.

Producers who have a risk in the pasture or hay crop must submit an acreage report to the FSA for all grazing land for which a grazing loss is being claimed.

The next deadline for annual acreage reporting in Virginia is July 15, 2026. LFP applicants who lease acres must be able to support their application with either a written lease or an Annual Lease Certification (form CCC-855).

Producers must submit an LFP application for pay-ment and supporting documentation no later than March 1, 2027, for 2026 losses.

Meanwhile, the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program provides eligible producers with compensation for above normal costs of hauling water and feed to livestock as well as transporting livestock to forage or other grazing acres.

Producers are required to submit a notice of loss and application for payment to their local FSA office no later than March 1, 2027, for 2026 calendar year losses.

ELAP also assists commercial apiarists who experi-ence a loss of feed due to drought conditions that may need to purchase short-term feed to sustain the honey-bees until additional natural feedstock becomes avail-able.

Additionally, eligible orchardists and nursery tree growers may be eligible for cost-share assistance through the Tree Assistance Program to replant or reha-bilitate eligible trees, bushes or vines.

TAP complements the Noninsured Crop Disaster As-sistance Program or crop insurance coverage, which covers the crop but not the plants or trees in all cases. For TAP, a program application must be filed within 90 days of the disaster event or the date when the loss of the trees, bushes or vines is apparent.

FSA also offers a variety of direct and guaranteed farm loans, including operating and emergency farm loans, to producers unable to secure commercial financing. Pro-ducers in counties with a primary or contiguous disaster designation may be eligible for low interest emergency loans to help them recover from production and physical losses.

Loans can help producers replace essential property, purchase inputs like livestock, equipment, feed and seed, cover family living expenses or refinance farm-related debts and other needs.

CLASSIFIEDS

CEMETERY LOTS

FOR SALE Monuments & Markers. Competitive pric-es year round. Call Jamie Combs 276-206-7801.

LEGAL NOTICE

TRUSTEE SALE
168 Railroad Ave, Saint Paul, VA 24283
Russell County

In execution of a Deed of Trust in the original princi-pal amount of $58,900.00, dated July 8, 2022 recorded in the Clerk's Office of the Circuit Court of the Russell County, Virginia, in Docu-ment No. 220001563 and modified in Document No. 240002278, at the request of the holder of the Note, the undersigned Substitute Trustee and will offer for sale at public auction at the entrance to the The front steps to the Russell County Circuit Courthouse, 53 East Main Street, Lebanon, on July 27, 2026at 1:15 PM the property described in said deed, located at the above address and briefly described as:
Parcel B, per plat record-ed in Plat Cabinet 1, Slide 489B, with any improve-ments thereon
Subject to any and all cov-enants, conditions, restric-tions, easements, and all other matters of record tak-ing priority over the Deed of Trust, if any, affecting the aforesaid property.
TERMS OF SALE: CASH: A deposit of $20,000.00 or 10% of the sales price, whichever is lower, cash or certified check will be re-quired at the time of sale, but no more than $9,000.00 of cash will be accepted, with settlement within fif-teen (15) days from the date of sale. Sale is subject to post sale confirmation that the borrower did not file for protection under the U.S. Bankruptcy Code pri-or to the sale which affects the validity of the sale, as well as to post-sale confir-mation of the status of the loan with the loan servicer including, but not limited to, determination of wheth-er the borrower entered into any repayment agreement, reinstated or paid off the loan prior to the sale. Sale is also subject to buyer pro-viding Trustee with informa-tion needed for reporting requirements required by Federal Law including Fin-Cen requirements (31 CFR Chapter X) within 15 days from date of sale .In any such event, the sale shall be null and void, and the Purchaser's sole remedy, in law or equity, shall be the return of his deposit without interest. Additional terms may be announced at the time of sale. Pursuant to the Federal Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, we advise you that this firm is a debt col-lector attempting to collect the indebtedness referred to herein and any information we obtain will be used for that purpose.
SAMUEL I. WHITE, P.C., Substitute Trustee
This is a communication from a debt collector.
FOR INFORMATION CON-TACT:
SAMUEL I. WHITE, P.C.(96087)
448 Viking Drive Suite 350
Virginia Beach, VA 23452
757-457-1460 · Call Be-tween 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.
or visit our website at www.siwpc.net
LN-6-24, 7-1;2026

Trustee's Sale
75 ANGEL WAY AVENUE, CLEVELAND, VA 24225
(Parcel ID: 105L SA 2802)

Default having been made in the terms of a certain Deed of Trust dated July 2, 2024, in the original princi-pal amount of $220,924.00 and recorded in the Clerk's Office of the Circuit Court of the County of Russell, Virginia on July 2, 2024, as Instrument Number 240001131, the under-signed Substitute Trustees will sell at public auction on August 20, 2026 at 11:00 AM, in front of the building housing the County of Rus-sell Circuit Court, 53 East Main Street, Lebanon, VA 24266, the property desig-nated as BEING all of those certain two lots or parcels of land, situate, lying and being in the Lebanon Mag-isterial District of Russell, Virginia, near Spring City, and on the south side of but not adjacent to Secondary Highway No. 662, and being known and designated as Lots Nos. Twenty (20) and Twenty-One (21), as shown on plat of a part of the H. Cleve Gray property, sur-veyed by J. W. Hortenstine, Certified Land Surveyor, and which` said plat is of record in the Office of the Clerk of Russell County, Virginia in Plat Book 2, at page 21, reference to which is here-by made and as if set out in full herein. Sale is subject to all prior liens, easements, restrictions, covenants, and conditions, if any, of record, or other matters which would be disclosed by an accurate survey or inspection of the premises.
TERMS: CASH. A deposit of $22,000.00 or 10% of the sale price, whichever is lower, will be required of the successful bidder at time of sale. Prior to the sale, in-terested bidders will be re-quired to register with and must present a bid deposit which may be held during the sale by the trustee. The bid deposit must be certi-fied funds and/or cash, but no more than $9,900.00 of cash will be accepted. The successful bidder's deposit will be retained at the sale and applied to the sale price. If held by the trustee, all other bid deposits will be returned to the unsuccess-ful bidders. Settlement is to be made within 15 days. The successful bidder will be responsible for obtaining possession of the property, and for all costs and fees re-lated to recording the Trust-ee's Deed, including the grantors tax. The successful bidder will be required to execute a Memorandum of Trustee's Sale, available for review upon request before the sale, outlining addition-al terms of sale and settle-ment. A Trustee's Deed will be prepared by Trustee's attorney at high bidder's ex-pense. This is a communi-cation from a debt collector. Tromberg, Miller, Morris & Partners, PLLC on behalf of Southeast Equity Trust-ees, LLC and/or NFPDS-VA LLC, Substitute Trustee(s), 5310 Markel Road, Suite 201, Richmond, VA 23230, File No. 26-001415-VA, Tel: 804-525-1570.
LN-6-24,7-15,22;2026

BID NOTICE

The Town of Lebanon will accept bid proposals for bridge safety inspections.

A bid package with specifications may be obtained at the Town Hall, 405 West Main Street, Lebanon, Virginia.

All sealed bids must be submitted by 4:00 P.M. on July 10, 2026.

For more information, please contact Andrew Shortt, Town Manager, at (276) 889-7200.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS NOTICE

The Town of Lebanon Request for Proposals for Information Technology (IT) Support & Hourly Services.
A Request for Proposal with specifications may be obtained at the Town Hall at 405 West Main Street, Lebanon, Virginia 24266.
All proposals must be submitted by 4:00 P.M. on July 10, 2026.
For more Information, please contact Andrew Shortt, Town Manager at (276) 889-7200.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS NOTICE

The Town of Lebanon Request for Proposals for Lawn Maintenance, Turf Management and Treatment Services.
A Request for Proposal with specifications may be obtained at the Town Hall at 405 West Main Street, Lebanon, Virginia 24266.
All proposals must be submitted by 4:00 P.M. on July 10, 2026.
For more Information, please contact Andrew Shortt, Town Manager at (276) 889-7200.

We are pledged to the letter and spirit of Virgin-ia's and HUD's equal opportunity housing poli-cies. Virginia's fair housing law makes it illegal to advertise any preference, limitation or discrimi-nation based on race, color, religion, national ori-gin, sex, elderliness, familial status or handicap. This newspaper (**The Lebanon News**) will not knowingly accept advertising for real estate that violates the fair housing law. Our readers are hereby informed that all dwellings advertised in this newspaper are available on an equal op-portunity basis. For more information about Vir-ginia's Fair Housing Law or to file a fair housing complaint call the Virginia Fair Housing Office at (804)367-8530. Toll free call (888)551-3247/ For the hearing impaired call (804)527-4290.

Transform Your Bathroom and Change Your Life.
FREE TOILET + $1,500 OFF*
For your FREE information kit and our Senior Discounts, Call Today Toll-Free **1-877-591-9950**
safestep
*Free toilet with purchase and installation of a walk-in tub or walk-in shower only. Offer available while supplies last. No cash value. Must present offer at time of purchase. Cannot be combined with any other offer. Market restrictions may apply. Offer available in select markets only. CSLB 1082165 NSCB 0082999 0083445 13VH11096000



PUBLIC NOTICE

Appalachian Agency for Senior Citizens will receive public comment on the proposed Area Plan for Aging Services for FY 2026-27. A 30-Day Public Comment Period will begin on Friday, June 26 and end on Sunday, July 26. In addition, a public hearing will be held prior to AASC's regularly scheduled Advisory Council meeting on Tuesday, July 7 at 12:00 PM. The hearing will be take place at AASC's central office, 216 College Ridge Road, Cedar Bluff, VA, located in the Wardell Industrial Park. To obtain information regarding the Area Plan and/or to submit public comments, contact CEO Brian Beck or CFO Carolyn Counts by: telephone at 276-964-4915; or email at bbeck@aasc.org.

EMPLOYMENT

EMPLOYMENT

The Town of Honaker is accepting applications for positions in the Public Works Maintenance Department. Pay will be based on experience. Applications are available at Town Hall, 455 Heritage Drive, Honaker, VA, Monday through Friday, 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM. The Town of Honaker is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Annual Drinking Water Quality Report

Town of Lebanon - PWSID No.1167455

INTRODUCTION
This Annual Drinking Water Quality Report for calendar year 2025 is designed to inform you about your drinking water quality. Our goal is to provide you with a safe and dependable supply of drinking water, and we want you to understand the efforts we make to protect your water supply. The quality of your drinking water must meet state and federal requirements administered by the Virginia Department of Health (VDH).

If you have questions about this report, please contact:Steve Sweet at (276) 889-7205

If you want additional information about any aspect of your drinking water or want to know how to participate in decisions that may affect the quality of your drinking water, please contact: Drew Shortt, Town Manager (276) 889-7200

The times and location of regularly scheduled board meetings are as follows: 2nd Monday of each month at the Town Hall

GENERAL INFORMATION
The sources of drinking water (both tap water and bottled water) include rivers, lakes, streams, ponds, reservoirs, springs, and wells. As water travels over the surface of the land or through the ground, it dissolves naturally occurring minerals and, in some cases, radioactive material, and can pick up substances resulting from the presence of animals or from human activity. Contaminants that may be present in source water include: (i) microbial contaminants, such as viruses and bacteria, which may come from sewage treatment plants, septic systems, agricultural livestock operations, and wildlife; (ii) inorganic contaminants, such as salts and metals, which can be naturally occurring or result from urban stormwater runoff, industrial or domestic wastewater discharges, oil and gas production, mining, or farming; (iii) pesticides and herbicides, which may come from a variety of sources such as agriculture, urban stormwater runoff, and residential uses; (iv) organic chemical contaminants, including synthetic and volatile organic chemicals, which are byproducts of industrial processes and petroleum production, and can also come from gas stations, urban stormwater runoff, and septic systems; (v) radioactive contaminants, which can be naturally occurring or be the result of oil and gas production and mining activities. In order to ensure that tap water is safe to drink, EPA prescribes regulations that limit the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. FDA regulations establish limits for contaminants in bottled water which must provide the same protection for public health.

Drinking water, including bottled water, may reasonably be expected to contain at least small amounts of some contaminants. The presence of contaminants does not necessarily indicate that water poses a health risk. More information about contaminants and potential health effects can be obtained by calling the Environmental Protection Agency's Safe Drinking Water Hotline (800-426-4791).

Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general population. Immuno-compromised persons such as persons with cancer who are undergoing chemotherapy, persons who have undergone organ transplants, people with HIV/AIDS or other immune system disorders, some elderly, and infants can be particularly at risk from infections. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers. EPA/CDC guidelines on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by Cryptosporidium and other microbial contaminants are available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline (800-426-4791).

SOURCE(S) and TREATMENT OF YOUR DRINKING WATER
The sourceof your drinking water is (X) surface water ( )groundwater under the direct influence of surface water ( ) groundwater as described below:

Is there any treatment of your drinking water supply? (X) Yes ( ) No

The Virginia Department of Health conducted a source water assessment of our system during 2020. The Big Cedar Creek was determined to be of high susceptibility to contamination using the criteria developed by the state in its approved Source Water Assessment Program. The assessment report consists of maps showing the source water assessment area, an inventory of known land use activities of concern, and documentation of any known contamination. The report is available by contacting (276) 889-7200at the phone number or address given elsewhere in this drinking water quality report.

DEFINITIONS
Contaminants in your drinking water are routinely monitored according to Federal and State regulations. The table on the next page shows the results of our monitoring for the period of January 1st to December 31st,**2025**. In the table and elsewhere in this report you will find many terms and abbreviations you might not be familiar with. The following definitions are provided to help you better understand these terms:

Maximum Contaminant Level, or MCL - the highest level of a contaminant that is allowed in drinking water. MCLs are set as close to the MCLGs as feasible using the best available treatment technology.

Maximum Contaminant Level Goal, or MCLG - the level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MCLGs allow for a margin of safety.

Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level Goal or MRDLG: the level of drinking water disinfectant below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MRDLGs do not reflect the benefits of the use of disinfectants to control microbial contaminants.

Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level or MRDL: the highest level of a disinfectant allowed in drinking water. There is convincing evidence that addition of a disinfectant is necessary for control of microbial contaminants.

Non-detects (ND) - lab analysis indicates that the contaminant is not present

Parts per million (ppm) or Milligrams per liter (mg/l) - one part per million corresponds to one minute in two years or a single penny in $10,000.

Parts per billion (ppb) or Micrograms per liter - one part per billion corresponds to one minute in 2,000 years, or a single penny in $10,000,000.

Picocuries per liter (pCi/L) - picocuries per liter is a measure of the radioactivity in water.

Action Level (AL) -the concentration of a contaminant which, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements which a water system must follow.

Treatment Technique (TT) - a required process intended to reduce the level of a contaminant in drinking water.

Level 1 assessment - a study of the water system to identify potential problems and determine (if possible) why total coliform bacteria have been found in our water system.

Level 2 assessment - a very detailed study of the waterworks to identify potential problems and determine (if possible) why an *E. coli* PMCL violation has occurred and/or why total coliform bacteria have been found in our water system on multiple occasions.

Nephelometric Turbidity Unit (NTU) - nephelometric turbidity unit is a measure of the clarity, or cloudiness, of water. Turbidity in excess of 5 NTU is just noticeable to the average person. Turbidity is monitored because it is a good indicator of the effectiveness of our filtration system.

WATER QUALITY RESULTS

Regulated Contaminants

Contaminant (units)	MCLG	MCL	Level Detected	Violation (Y/N)	Range	Date of Sample	Typical Source of Contamination
Nitrate (ppm)	10	10	1.77	N	-	2/4/2025	Runoff from fertilizer use; Leaching from septic tanks, sewage; Erosion of natural deposits
Barium (ppm)	2	2	0.028	N	-	2/4/2025	Discharge of drilling waste; Discharge from metal refineries; Erosion of natural deposits
Fluoride(ppm)	4	4	ND	N		2/4/2025	Erosion of natural deposits; Water additive which promotes strong teeth; Discharge from fertilizer and aluminum factories
Combined Radium (pCi/l)	0	5	0.2	N	-	11/9/2021	Erosion of Natural Deposits
Chlorine (ppm)	MRDLG = 4	MRDL = 4	1.5	N	0.8-2.6	2025	Water additive used to control microbes
Total Organic Carbon	NA	TT, met when ≥1	1	N	0.62-0.79	2025	Naturally present in the environment
Haloacetic Acids (ppb)	NA	60	25	N	11-38	2025	By-product of drinking water disinfection
Total Trihalomethanes (ppb)	NA	80	18	N	7.8-27	2025	By-product of drinking water disinfection
Turbidity	NA	TT,1 NTU Max	0.04	N	0.02 – 0.06	2025	Soil runoff
		TT, ≤ 0.3 NTU 95% of the time	100%	N			

Lead and Copper Contaminants

Contaminant (units)	MCLG	Action Level	90th Percentile	Date of Sampling	# of Sampling Sites Exceeding Action Level	Typical Source of Contamination
Lead (ppb)	0	AL = 15	0 ppb	7/11/2024	0	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; Erosion of natural deposits
Copper (ppm)	1.3 mg/L	AL = 1.3	0.0488 mg/L	7/11/2024	0	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; Erosion of natural deposits

Monitoring Results for Sodium (Unregulated-No Limits Designated)			
Level Detected (unit)	Sample Date	Typical Source	Guidance
3.2 (mg/L)	2/4/2025	Naturally Occuring; Addition of treatment chemicals/processes	For individuals on a very low sodium diet (500 mg/day), EPA recommends that drinking-water sodium not exceed 20 mg/L. Should you have a health concern, contact your health care provider.

The state allows us to monitor for some contaminants less than once per year because the concentrations of these contaminants do not change frequently. Some of our data presented in the above tables, though accurate, is more than one year old.

MCL's are set at very stringent levels by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. In developing the standards EPA assumes that the average adult drinks 2 liters of water each day throughout a 70-year life span. EPA generally sets MCLs at levels that will result in no adverse health effects for some contaminants or a one-in-ten-thousand to one-in-a-million chance of having the described health effect for other contaminants.

VIOLATION INFORMATION – Did any PMCL or TT violation occur during the year? ( ) Yes (X) No

VIOLATION INFORMATION – Did any monitoring, reporting, or other violations occur during the year? (X) Yes () No

State Health Officials have advised us of a failure to perform required monitoring in accordance with the Virginia Waterworks Regulations. We are required to monitor your drinking water for specific contaminants on a regular basis. Results of regular monitoring are an indicator of whether or not our drinking water meets health standards. During November 2025, we did not complete all monitoring for bacteriological analysi. Therefore, we cannot be sure of the quality of our drinking water during that time. Four routine samples were required for analysis and two were analyzed. State health officials believe that there is little need for concern about the safety of your water because past records show that our waterworks has had no documented problems, however, routine sampling and examination are required to determine the quality of water delivered to our customers. There is nothing you need to do at this time. We will attempt to collect the proper number of required samples during the next monitoring period, carefully review the results obtained by the laboratory, and collect additional samples when needed.

ADDITIONAL HEALTH INFORMATION

If present, elevated levels of lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. Lead in drinking water is primarily from materials and components associated with service lines and home plumbing. Town of Lebanon is responsible for providing high quality drinking water, but cannot control the variety of materials used in plumbing components. When your water has been sitting for several hours, you can minimize the potential for lead exposure by flushing your tap for 30 seconds to two minutes before using water for drinking or cooking. If you are concerned about lead in your water, you may wish to have your water tested. Information on lead in drinking water, testing methods, and steps you can take to minimize exposure is available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline (800-426-4791). You can also use a filter certified by an American National Standards Institute accredited certifier to reduce lead in drinking water. If you are concerned about lead in your water and wish to have your water tested, contact The Town of Lebanon. Information on lead in drinking water, testing methods, and steps you can take to minimize exposure is available at http://www.epa.gov/safewater/lead.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR WATERWORKS

Service Line Inventory

The Town of Lebanon has completed the required Lead Service Line Inventory and submitted the results to the Virginia Department of Health Office of Drinking Water. Based on customer self-identification, historical records and field investigation, we have determined that there are no Lead Lines, Galvanized Lines Requiring Replacement and noUnknown materials in the system. We thank you for your help and cooperation. The full inventory is available on the Town website via interactive mapping.

Health Effects Information

Exposure to lead in drinking water can cause serious health effects in all age groups. Infants and children can have decreases in IQ and attention span. Lead exposure can lead to new learning and behavior problems or exacerbate existing learning and behavior problems. The children of women who are exposed to lead before or during pregnancy can have increased risk of these adverse health effects. Adults can have increased risks of heart disease, high blood pressure, kidney or nervous system problems.

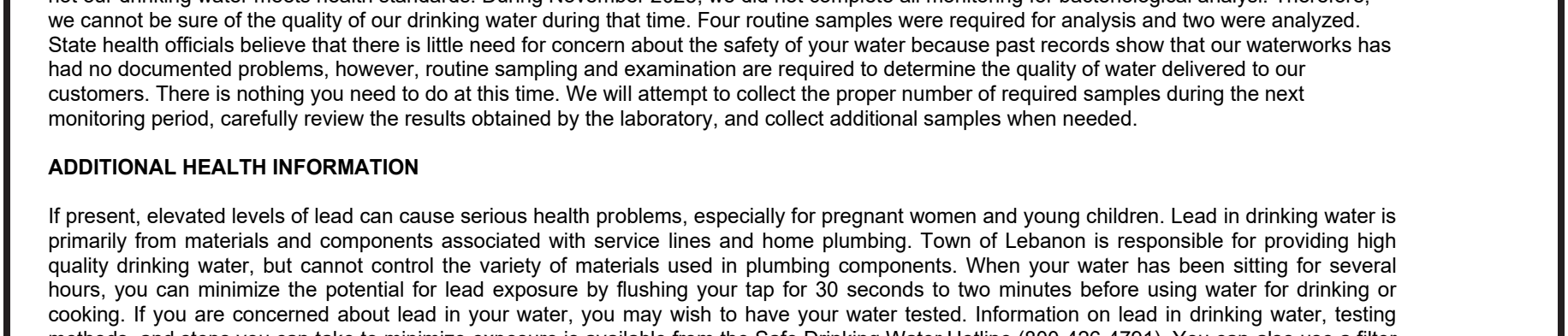




Photo courtesy of the Virginia Governor's Office

On June 12, 2026, Gov. Abigail Spanberger was joined by student interns from agencies across the commonwealth and the 2026 Governor's Fellows as she signed bipartisan legislation creating Virginia's first State Internship Coordinator. The new role will strengthen state internship programs and expand opportunities for students to gain hands-on experience in public service and build successful careers in Virginia.

Va. centralizes state internship programs to benefit students, workforce

By NATHANIEL CLINE
Virginia Mercury

Virginia Gov. Abigail Spanberger recently signed a law creating a Virginia State Internship coordinator position, designed to improve how students and recent graduates gain workforce experience through state agencies.

In 2019, Virginia established the Innovative Internship Fund and Program to expand paid and credit-bearing internships statewide, reinforcing the commonwealth's commitment to workforce development. The new role builds on that foundation, as does the Virginia Talent + Opportunity Partnership, which helps connect students and government agencies with these opportunities.

Then in 2023, the Department of Human Resource Management, in partnership with the State Council of Higher Education in Virginia and V-TOP, created the COVA Internship Connection Pilot, which uses the V-TOP system to help agencies recruit interns.

The COVA Internship Connection Pilot was designed to be a temporary, multi-agency initiative during and after the COVID pandemic, so students studying remotely could still find meaningful paid or unpaid, work-based learning through the state government.

When Spanberger signed legislation carried by Sen. Lashrecse Aird, D-Henrico, and Del. Rip Sullivan, D-Fairfax, the pilot was transformed into a permanent, centrally managed program.

"This is a great example of what the commonwealth can do to provide real-world opportunities for young, talented people entering the workforce," Spanberger said in a statement on Friday. "Virginia is the top state for talent in America, and one of the most powerful tools we have is making sure talented students stay and grow right here in Virginia."

The legislation aims to centralize internship outreach, streamline application processes and provide agency support, making internships more visible and accessible to all students, including those from under-resourced schools and students with disabilities.

The legislation strengthens data collection and program tracking to measure internship results and enhance Virginia's long-term workforce development.

"Internships are an essential opportunity to provide young people on-the-job experience and employers access to the workforce of the future," Sullivan said in a statement. "As one of the largest employers in Virginia, it is imperative that the Virginia state government lead by example by expanding quality internships and attracting talent to support its vital mission."

As someone who started her public service with a state government internship, Aird said she knows firsthand how transformative such opportunities can be for young people. She cited Virginia's aging public workforce as a driver of the new law that will help develop the next generation of public servants.

"By strengthening and coordinating internship opportunities across state government, we can build a workforce that better reflects the communities it serves and ensure Virginia remains prepared to meet the challenges of tomorrow," Aird said.

Max Berckmueller, who graduated early from the College of William & Mary in 2023, credits his internships at multiple state agencies with helping him reach his goal of gaining real experience and making a tangible difference in his fellow Virginians' lives.

Now working as a data analyst with the Department of the Treasury, Berckmueller helps review monetary and budgetary matters for the state.

"Conducting a budget or fiscal analysis, and seeing how the Department of Planning and Budget is taking that into account and changing their decisions based on the analysis that I did...that's pretty cool," Berckmueller said.

"You might not get those kinds of opportunities at the federal government, but the state always needs a lot of help, and there's always a lot to do," he added.

Spanberger also launched InternshipsVA, a statewide initiative to connect students with paid internships and strengthen Virginia's workforce, as one of her first major economic development announcements at the start of her term. Recently, the program won a national Business Facilities 2026 Economic Development Organization (EDO) award.

Funding for the new position is included in the House and Senate's budget proposals, which lawmakers are working to reconcile and finalize ahead of a June 30 deadline. The position is estimated to cost annually $172,224.

