

County seeks input for updated comprehensive plan

By SHAWN STREET
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Russell County officials are updating the county's comprehensive plan and are seeking public input. "Russell County is updating its Comprehensive Plan, which will help guide decisions about growth, economic development, infrastructure, housing, recreation, and community services over the next 10–20 years," read a statement on the Russell County Board of Supervisors' social media. "Your input is important, and we encourage everyone to take a few minutes to complete the sur-

vey. Thank you for helping shape the future of Russell County!" The community survey asks: What area of Russell County do you live in? What is your age group? How would you rate your overall quality of life in Russell County? Which concentration areas are the MOST important to the future of Russell County? What do you believe is Russell County's greatest strength? What is the biggest challenge facing Russell County? What type of economic development would you most

like to see in Russell County? What improvements would most improve your community? (select up to three) Looking ahead 20 years, what should be Russell County's highest priority? Do you believe Russell County is headed in the right direction? Please share any additional comments or ideas for the future of Russell County. The survey can be found on the Russell County Board of Supervisors' Facebook page at: www.facebook.com/russellcountyvirginia.



Jeremy Hill opened Roadhouse Operations LLC (dba Blue Nose Aerial Imaging of Southwest Virginia) to provide aerial drone service to residents and businesses in the region.

Blue Nose Aerial Imaging of Southwest Virginia approved for VCEDA grant

Professional drone-based aerial imaging, photogrammetry, mapping inspection and media service is now available in Russell County as Jeremy and Roxanna Hill open Roadhouse Operations LLC, operating at Blue Nose Aerial Imaging of Southwest Virginia. Blue Nose Aerial Imaging of Southwest Virginia is a recent recipient of a \$10,000 Virginia Coalfield Economic Development Authority Seed Capital Matching Grant. Seed capital grants are funded from regional funds received by VCEDA which are paid by the natural gas industry. "Blue Nose Aerial Imaging of Southwest Virginia provides services utilized by a wide variety of industries including transportation, construction, forestry, agriculture, real estate and more," said Jonathan Belcher, VCEDA executive director/general counsel. "The business projects three full-time employees and one part-time employee within five years." Jeremy Hill noted services offered include orthomosaic mapping, volumetric calculations, thermal imaging, asset inspections and GIS-ready data deliverables. Cattle management and herd analysis, leased hunting property game assessments, 2D and 3D mapping, public safety assistance, precision agriculture, real estate and more are among the primary services currently being provided in the region. The company is registered on SAM.gov and eVA and holds Virginia SWaM certifications. Also in the works is HUBZone certification to strengthen

federal and prime contractor positioning. The Russell County company is affiliated with Blue Nose Aerial Imaging, a nationwide provider of commercial drone services. "We are building the business to support contractors, engineering teams, real estate professionals, local governments, utilities and other organizations needing a responsive small business partner capable of producing professional results quickly and cost-effectively," Hill said. "We work with others to leverage relationships with Infra-mappa for asset-management related workflow support, Inotek for thermal reporting and GovCon support to improve contracting readiness." Hill noted his fascination with aviation began early in life, leading him to pursue aerial imaging. He is a Level I Thermologist, OSHA 10 safety, CPR and FAA Part 107 certified. He is a native of New Hampshire, where he said he grew up loving flight. from Roanoke, Va., west to the Tri-Cities "We are a solutions-based company and we can collect the data, analyze it and turn it into solutions," Hill said. He said the seed capital grant has been used for equipment as well as being planned for outreach, education and marketing events. "The VCEDA grant is paramount to my success," Hill said. Hill worked with the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at Southwest Virginia Com-

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Virginia's annual crime analysis report released

By SHAWN STREET
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Virginia's official comprehensive report on local and statewide crime figures for 2025 has been released. Titled Crime in Virginia, the report provides precise rates and occurrences of crimes committed in towns, cities and counties across the Commonwealth. In the category of Property Crimes, the Lebanon Police Department reported four cases of burglary, 58 cases of larceny, 12 cases of fraud, and two motor vehicle thefts. Lebanon saw one case each of animal cruelty and pornography/obscene materials. Three weapons charges were reported. According to the report, there were 25 drug cases. In the area of violent crime, Lebanon reported two instances of aggravated assault, and two cases of rape. Overall, the number of cases in several categories saw a decrease from 2024 to 2025. Larceny was down in Lebanon by just under 39 percent, vehicle theft was down 33 percent and weapons charges decreased by 70 percent. Rape saw an increase as there was one case reported in 2024. Fraud cases doubled from six to 12. Burglary rose from two to four cases. The other categories saw no change. Across the county there were 22 cases of burglary reported. That was a decrease of just over 15 percent. There were 100 cases of larceny reported, which is a decrease of just under 10 percent from last year. Fraud saw an increase of 52 percent, as a total of 76 cases were reported. The vast majority of those cases involved false pretenses/swindle/confidence game. There was no change in the number of motor vehicle thefts from 2024, as the Russell County Sheriff's Office reported 19 cases of this crime. Rape cases decreased by 50 percent, as eight crimes were reported in 2025. Aggravated assault cases also saw a decrease. A total of 38 cases were reported, which was a decrease of just under 30 percent. Two robbery cases were reported in 2025. Zero cases were reported in 2024. Drug offenses increased across the county by 4.71 percent. A total of 89 cases were reported last year. Pornography cases increased by a rate of 38 percent, as a total of 47 crimes were reported. Weapons law violations decreased by 20 percent, as a total of 24 crimes were recorded. The rate of animal cruelty remained unchanged with four cases recorded.

Drivers reminded of school bus safety

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Students will be returning to class later this week and law enforcement agencies are reminding motorists of school bus safety laws. Virginia State Police remind drivers that they are required to follow certain laws when encountering a school bus. Virginia motorists must: stop for stopped school buses with flashing red lights and an extended stop sign when approaching from any direction remain stopped until everyone is clear and the bus

moves again stop whenever the bus is loading or unloading passengers, even if the lights and stop sign are not activated If a school bus is on the opposite side of a median or barrier, motorists aren't required to stop; however, drivers should be prepared for students exiting the school bus and crossing into their lanes. Motorists should watch for children gathering near bus stops, and walking in groups to and from the bus stop. Drivers should be extra alert for children walking or bicycling to school when: backing out of a driveway or leaving a garage driving in neighborhoods with school zones

there are no sidewalks in a neighborhood Most school bus incidents happen when students are traveling to the bus stop, or getting on and off the bus. If students have to cross the street in front of the bus, they should walk on the sidewalk or along the side of the road to a point at least five giant steps (10 feet) ahead of the bus before crossing. Students need to make sure they can see the bus driver, and that the driver sees them. When the bus approaches, students should line up at least five giant steps (10 feet) away from the curb and the street. When the bus comes to a complete stop and the door opens, students should check for traffic once more before boarding.

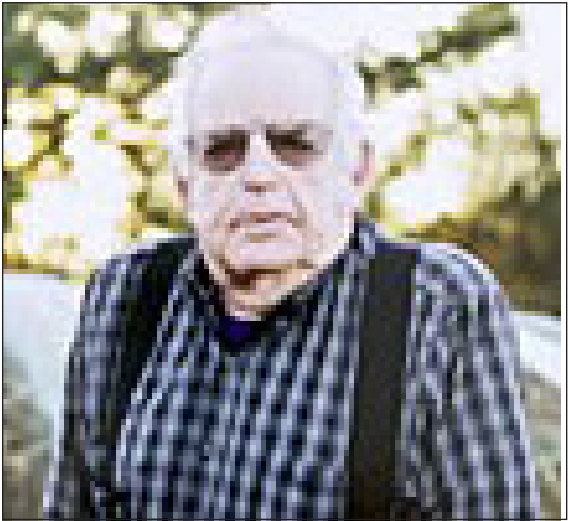


OBITUARIES

Billy Sam Price

BILLY SAM PRICE, 93, went to be with the Lord on Sunday, July 26, at Johnston Memorial Hospital surrounded by his family. He was preceded in death by his parents, Bert Price and Martha Ferguson Price; his wife of sixty years, Betty Fields Price, and great-grandson, Jackson Cook; sisters, Wilma Jean Ganoë and Doris Garrett; brother, Roland “Hambone” Price, and special nephew, Danny Garrett. He loved farming, the Russell County Fair and spending time with his family. He was a member of the Russell County Fair Livestock Hall of Fame, and he was a member of the Russell County Fair Association Livestock committee. He was a member of

Bascom United Methodist Church until the loss of the church and then he became a member of Mount Olive Church. He was blessed with many friends too numerous to mention. Survivors include daughters, Wilma Sue “Tootie” Kiser and husband Robbie, Bonnie Harvey and husband Rick and Paula Howington and husband Neal; grandchildren, Mabelle Kiser, Sarah Holliday, Sam Harvey, Susan Mutter, Tiffany Smith and Amanda Cook; thirteen great-grandchildren and several nieces and nephews also survive. The funeral service was conducted at 1 p.m. on Friday, July 31, 2026, in the Combs-Hess Funeral and Cremation Service Chapel with Pastor Bill Price and Randy Williams officiating.



Burial followed in Russell Memorial Cemetery. The family received friends from 6 p.m. until 8 p.m. on Thursday, July 30, 2026, at the funeral home. Pallbearers were Zack Ketron, Max Campbell, Cliff Price, Greg Price, Sam Harvey and Isaac McGlothlin.

Expressions of sympathy may be made on Combs-Hess Funeral & Cremation Service Facebook page and our website at www.chfunerals.com. Combs-Hess Funeral Service, 291 Highway 71 Fincastle Road, Lebanon, VA 24266, (276) 889-4444.

Lebanon man arrested for alleged sex crimes in Bristol

By SHAWN STREET
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A Lebanon man has been arrested as part of an undercover operation by the Bristol Tennessee Police Department. The investigation netted eight arrests and targeted suspected online predators. According to a press release from the Bristol Tennessee Police Department, the suspects were allegedly “engaged in conversations of an explicit sexual nature” with detectives who were posing as underage girls. Police said some of the suspects sent or asked for nude photographs and were making plans to meet who they thought was a minor for sexual activity. Among those arrested was David A. Carter, 47, of Lebanon. Carter is charged with sexual exploitation of a minor via electronic means and solicitation of a minor.

Others arrested were: Daniel A. Dishman, 40, of Chilhowie, Virginia, who is charged with sexual exploitation of a minor via electronic means and solicitation of a minor. Anthony E. Stasik, 29, of Bristol, Virginia, who is charged with solicitation of a minor. Ryan A. Hodge, 41, of Bristol, Tennessee, who is charged with sexual exploitation of a minor via electronic means and solicitation of a minor. Brandon M. Castle, 29, of Bristol, Tennessee, who is charged with solicitation of a minor and patronizing prostitution of a minor. Joseph M. Collins, 35, of Gray, Tennessee, who is charged with sexual exploitation of a minor via electronic means and solicitation of a minor. Romeo D. Taylor, 25, of Bristol, Virginia, who is charged with sexual exploitation of a minor via electronic means and solicitation of a minor. Timothy A. Foley, Jr., 44, of Bluefield, Virginia, who is charged with sexual exploitation of a minor via electronic means, solicitation of a minor, and patronizing prostitution of a minor.

Virginia DMV celebrates Virginia Mobile ID’s expansion to Southwest Virginia

Following successful regional rollouts across the Commonwealth, the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles has officially expanded Virginia Mobile ID to Southwest Virginia, making it available for use across the state. The expansion kicks off in Abingdon at the 77th Virginia Highlands Festival, where festivalgoers can experience Virginia Mobile ID firsthand, as well as at participating locations across the region. Designed with convenience and data privacy in mind, Virginia Mobile ID allows users to verify their identity or age in seconds with a quick QR code scan. Using unique encryption, Virginia Mobile ID securely transmits only the required data directly to a verifier device, ensuring the user’s personal information remains protected without having to hand over their phone. “This is an exciting milestone for Virginia Mobile ID,” said DMV Commissioner Sandra M. Jack. “With Southwest Virginia now joining our growing network of participating businesses and organizations, Virginians can use their Virginia Mobile ID in every region of the Commonwealth. Whether you’re catching a ballgame, traveling through the airport, attending a festival or visiting participating businesses, Virginia Mobile ID is making everyday interactions more convenient, secure and accessible across the state.” Getting started with Virginia Mobile ID only takes a few minutes, and the process can be completed at home or while on the go. Customers can download the free app from the App Store or Google Play, scan their driver’s license or ID card, complete a quick face verification and begin using their mobile ID immediately. Virginia Mobile ID is a digital companion to the physical ID, and residents must always carry their physical ID as a backup, especially when driving. Attendees at the Virginia Highlands Festival can use Virginia Mobile ID at the beer garden from July 30 through Aug. 1 to securely confirm they are over 21 without sharing unnecessary personal information, such as their name and home address. By introducing the

option at the festival this summer, event leadership aims to streamline the process of navigating the event while protecting guest privacy. “We are thrilled to lead the way in Southwest Virginia with Virginia Mobile ID,” said Deirdre Cole, executive producer of the Virginia Highlands Festival. “Incorporating this technology at our festival grounds gives our guests a more modern way to verify their age, so they can spend more time enjoying everything that the festival has to offer. It’s a great step forward for both our attendees and the broader business community.” In addition to the Virginia Highlands Festival, Virginia Mobile ID is currently accepted at numerous participating locations across Southwest Virginia, including: Solstice Farm Brewery (Blacksburg) Harvester Performance Center (Rocky Mount) The Millwald Theatre (Wytheville) Martins Downtown (Roanoke) Sidecar (Roanoke) Jaybird Tavern (Roanoke) Twisted Track Brewing (Roanoke) A Few Old Goats Brewing (Roanoke) And many more locations. Accepting Virginia Mobile ID is fast and simple for local businesses, with no added costs. Business owners can get started today by downloading the free Virginia Mobile ID Verifier app from the App Store or Google Play. In addition to participating businesses, stadiums and venues across the Commonwealth, Virginia Mobile ID is accepted at TSA checkpoints at 350+ U.S. airports, pilot Virginia ABC stores, all DMV Customer Service Centers and by Virginia State Police. DMV is continuing to broaden acceptance of Virginia Mobile ID statewide with a variety of businesses and organizations. For more information about downloading and using the Virginia Mobile ID app, benefits, participating locations, security features and frequently asked questions, visit DMV’s website.

AERIAL IMAGING

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munity College in developing his application to VCEDA. He received a letter of support from the Russell County Industrial Development Authority. “The Small Business Development Center congratulates Roadhouse Operations LLC, dba Blue Nose Aerial Imaging of Southwest Virginia, as they establish and grow their business in our region. We are always excited to see new entrepreneurs invest in Southwest Virginia, bringing innovation, specialized services and new opportunities to our local economy,” said Denise Harmon, SBDC director at SWCC. “It has been a pleasure working with this client through the SBDC and we appreciate the opportunity to assist them as they launch their business. We wish them continued success and look forward to seeing Blue Nose Aerial Imaging thrive in Russell County and throughout Southwest Virginia. Welcome to Russell County -- we are proud to have you as part of our business community.” “Blue Nose Aerial Imaging is meeting a growing demand for professional drone services here in Russell County,” said Laura Gilmer, executive director of the Russell County Industrial Development Authority. “We’re proud to support this kind of innovative, professional service business, which can bring new jobs and tax revenue to the county.” For more information about Blue Nose Aerial, interested persons may visit the website at www.blunose-aerial.com, their Facebook page at Blue Nose Aerial of Southwest Virginia, or call 276-885-5439.

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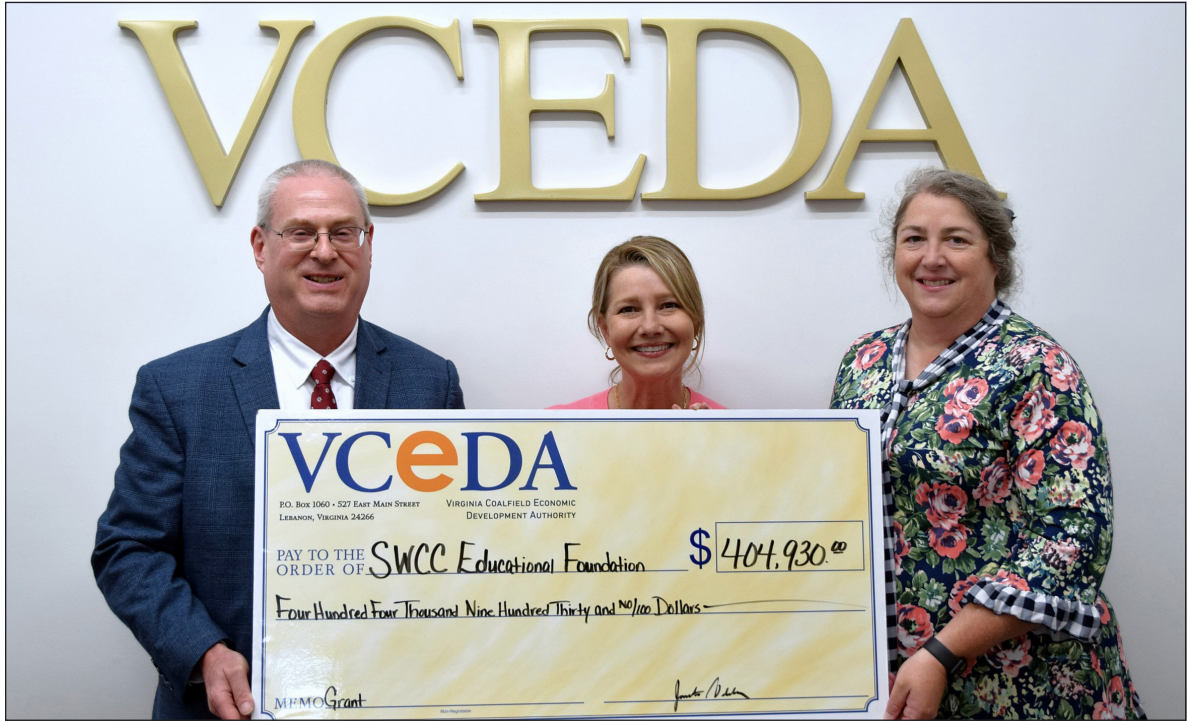
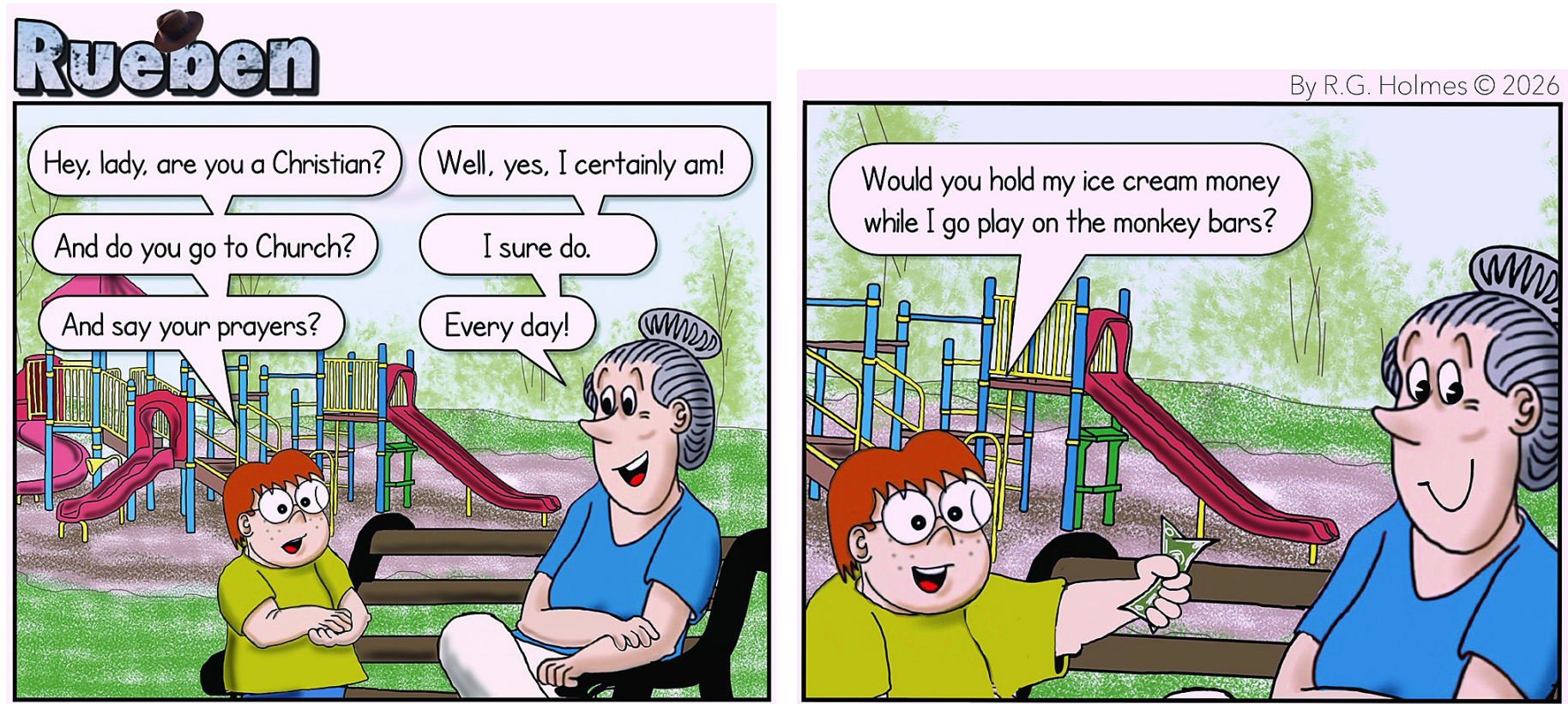
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THE LEBANON NEWS
The Lebanon News (USPS:308-400) is published weekly on Wednesday by Virginia Media, Inc. Periodicals Postage Paid at Lebanon, Va. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Lebanon News, 1633 W Main St, Salem, VA 24153

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.

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VCEDA Executive Director/General Counsel Jonathan Belcher presents a ceremonial check for \$404,930 to Southwest Virginia Community College Vice President of Institutional Advancement Susan Lowe and SWCC Small Business Development Center Executive Director Denise Harmon.

\$404,930 VCEDA grant to SWCC Educational Foundation will assist with workforce development, training

A grant of up to \$404,930 from the Virginia Coalfield Economic Development Authority to the Southwest Virginia Community College Educational Foundation was closed recently.

The funds will be used for workforce development and training, for the purchase of orbital welding units and to support the Small Business Development Center at SWCC in its assistance to entrepreneurs and small business owners in the VCEDA region.

“VCEDA is pleased to once again provide support to SWCC to assist in workforce development and training for students in our region, to assist with the purchase of needed equipment to expand the college’s welding training options and to support the SBDC with which we work closely through our VCEDA Seed Capital Matching Grant program,” said VCEDA Executive Director/General Counsel Jonathan Belcher.

The workforce development and training component of the recent grant approval will continue funding to be used for scholarships for the emerging workforce, training instructional costs, customized workforce training for area businesses, work-based learning opportunities, costs of assessments and costs of administering National Career Readiness Certificate and other workforce testing for residents and/or workers in the VCEDA region.

That funding is specifically used in situations where training does not otherwise always qualify for other

forms of financial assistance. Hundreds of workers and potential workers have been trained with the funding at both SWCC and Mountain Empire Community College.

The purchase of two orbital welding units for training purposes will support training in high purity piping systems for the food and beverage industry. These systems require precise, contamination-free welds to meet strict sanitary and regulatory standards. In addition, precision welding technology is widely used in industries including aerospace, energy, pharmaceuticals and advanced manufacturing. The equipment will be integrated into both an advanced welding program and a short-term workforce training program.

The third component of the grant request is for funding to help support workforce development and training for entrepreneurs and small business owners in the region including a part-time small business advisor position within the SBDC office at SWCC to assist in the delivery of one-on-one confidential advising on business planning, financial strategy, operations and market analysis.

“Thanks to VCEDA’s partnership and vision, Southwest can continue expanding workforce initiatives that prepare students for high-demand careers,” said SWCC Vice President of Institutional Advancement Susan Lowe. “Their support helps transform potential into opportunity and strengthens the economic future of our region.”

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 they 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 incredibly strong, courageous and intelligent. We are here to aid in the recovery process with individual 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. McElhenry Camp 840 meets 4th Thursday each month at 6:30 p.m. at the Russell Co. Public Library, Lebanon, Va.

LAWARY AND GUSSIE COX FAMILY REUNION

The family reunion of Lawary and Gussie Cox will be on Sunday, August 9, 2026 at the Belfast-Elk Garden Fire Dept. Auxiliary Hall. Family, relatives and friends are invited. The potluck lunch will be at 1 p.m. Please bring your favorite food or dessert and join us for good food, fun & fellowship!

STATZER REUNION

The Statzer Reunion will be Saturday, August 15 at the Oak Grove Community Center. Lunch will be served around noon. Family & Friends...please join us.

RUSSELL COUNTY DISASTER RECOVERY TASK FORCE MEETING

Russell County Disaster Recovery Task Force will meet Thursday, August 20, 2026, at Pat’s Diner in Lebanon. Recovery takes community partners, so representatives of churches and community organizations are encouraged to attend. Find us on Facebook!

COMMUNITY MEN’S BREAKFAST

A Community Men’s Breakfast originally organized by men of the Lebanon Memorial United Methodist Church is held the 2nd Saturday each month at Pat’s Kountry Diner at 8 a.m. All men in the area are welcome to attend. The purpose of the gathering is to share in fun, food and fellowship. Breakfast can be purchased from a buffet or menu. If not interested in eating breakfast, just show up for funny stories, a brief devotional, and community announcements. These three activities take about 20 minutes.

The next breakfast is August 8, 2026. We hope you will join us.



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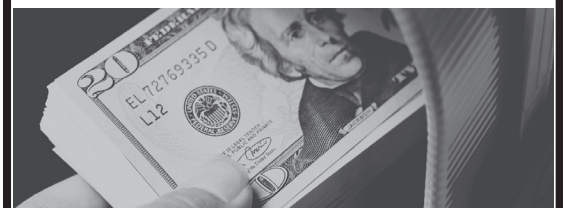
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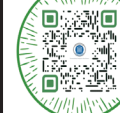
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Enjoy this delicacy from the comforts of home

Certain foods have inspired a devotion that other dishes simply cannot match. Oysters certainly fit that mold. To oyster lovers, there’s simply no better way to start a meal than to order a plate of these wildly popular delicacies.

Of course, oysters also can be enjoyed at home. Whether you procure your own oysters or find them at your local fishery, this recipe for “Oysters With Spinach and Gruyere” from Lines+Angles is a simple and tasty way to enjoy this popular delicacy once you arrive home.

OYSTERS WITH SPINACH AND GRUYERE

Makes 4 servings

24	oysters (in the shell), scrubbed
1/2	cup butter, melted
6	ounces fresh spinach, cooked and drained
6	tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
4	ounces Gruyere cheese, grated
1	lemon, cut into wedges, for garnish

- Shuck oysters using an oyster knife. Scrub the inside of the deeper shell.
- Brush the inside of each shell with a generous amount of melted butter. Spread a layer of cooked spinach on each shell. Dip each oyster in Worcestershire sauce and place on top of spinach. Sprinkle each oyster with remaining melted butter and top with grated Gruyere cheese.
- Place oysters in a shallow pan or on a cookie sheet. Broil quickly or until the edges of the oyster curl and the cheese is bubbly and golden brown.
- Serve on a bed of sea salt with lemon wedges.



Congressman Griffith’s: More Legislative Momentum on Health Care

In July 2025, I received an appointment to be Chairman of the Health Subcommittee for the House Committee on Energy and Commerce.

In the first week following my appointment, I toured various hospitals in Virginia’s Ninth District. My visits included Lee County Community Hospital in Pennington Gap, Clinch Valley Medical Center in Richlands, Carilion Giles Community Hospital in Pearisburg, and LewisGale Hospital Montgomery in Blacksburg.

My discussions with hospital leadership and staff touched on topics of hospital solvency, health care access challenges and the rural health care landscape.

Additionally, I consulted with our Community Health Centers (CHCs). During my first week as Health Subcommittee Chairman, I visited the Connect Health + Wellness location in Martinsville.

I support federal engagement with health care providers and patients to improve health care outcomes in rural America.

This engagement has continued in 2026.

I am in close contact with rural hospitals in Virginia’s Ninth District. These vital health care providers serve the medical needs of our rural communities with care, dignity and professionalism.

One hospital is Twin County Regional Healthcare in Galax. In May, I met with Twin County hospital leadership and local officials. Together, we are committed to serving the medical needs of our rural communities.

Another hospital with this mission is Clinch Valley Health Medical Center. This summer, I toured its facility. Clinch Valley Health President and CEO Peter Mulkey emphasized that these meetings help us “work together” to “provide top quality care to those that call our region home.”

For more of my summer meetings, I visited Abingdon and toured the Appalachian Highlands Community Dental Center. The clinic strives to be a source of care in Southwest Virginia.

Additionally, in Wise County, I had the privilege to visit a weekend-long expo, the Move Mountains Medical Mission.

This expo featured volunteer actions from numerous



MORGAN GRIFFITH

WEEKLY REPORT FROM THE CAPITOL

health care providers, including Radford University’s nursing program, UVA-Wise personnel and the Health Wagon.

There was even a free veterinary clinic!

Further, I will have additional opportunities to meet providers, medical staff and patients. I will continue to promote voices in our region to help advance rural health care solutions.

My Health Subcommittee has taken advantage of some opportunities to advance health care solutions. I was proud to push forward many bills for full House consideration.

These include H.R. 2821, the FDA Modernization Act 3.0.

This bill promotes modern alternative testing methods to minimize animal testing.

The horrors of federal testing on animals hit Capitol Hill when Dr. Anthony Fauci came under fire for his agency, NIAID, and its taxpayer-funded experiments on beagles. This unnecessary dog testing included cutting out vocal cords, infesting them with ticks and placing them in cages with infectious sandflies.

House passage of the FDA Modernization Act 3.0 is a win for animal rights without sacrificing scientific breakthroughs.

Further, the bill improves development of clinical drugs by encouraging use of alternative methods, such as

computational AI models.As our agencies test scientific advances and potential treatments, new clinical drugs can hit the market for patients.

A second bill to win House support is H.R. 6238, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) IMPROVE Maternal Care Act.

This legislation delivers research funding for maternal care. With more than one million women of childbearing age in Virginia, this kind of funding will help our expectant mothers.

We also passed other bills that support research funding.

In the case of H.R. 3491, the DeOndra Dixon INCLUDE Project Act of 2025, we provide federal funding for research into Down syndrome.

We must continue to work to better understand this condition.

Additionally, the House passed the EARLY Act Reauthorization of 2025.

This bill delivers funding for breast cancer awareness campaigns to promote early detection.

Breast cancer is one of the most common forms of cancer. According to the National Cancer Institute, a 2026 study found 15 percent of new cancer cases are breast cancer.

By educating our communities and patients on breast cancer, this legislation will help with diagnosis efforts.

These bills are a pillar of my Health Subcommittee’s efforts to improve health care outcomes across the United States.

We will have to wait for the Senate to pass them as well, but when it comes to maternal care, Down syndrome, and breast cancer I cannot imagine the Senate will not concur.

I will continue to make the most of my appointment to the Health Subcommittee to advance policies, create health care opportunities and strengthen options for patients.

If you have questions, concerns, or comments, feel free to contact my office. You can call my Abingdon 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/>.

Debbie Gibson: Stop Signs We All Need to Heed

Would you like a gift, or two, or three? This week I’m going to share with you a list of things to give yourself. You could call them the “Stop Signs We All Need to Heed.”

Stop spending time with the wrong people. – Life is too short to spend time with people who suck the happiness out of you. If someone wants you in their life, they’ll make room for you. You shouldn’t have to fight for a spot. Never, ever share yourself with someone who continuously overlooks your worth. And remember, it’s not the people that stand by your side when you’re at your best, but the ones who stand beside you when you’re at your worst that are your true friends.

Stop running from your problems. – Face them head on. No, it won’t be easy. There is no person in the world capable of flawlessly handling every punch thrown at them. We aren’t supposed to be able to instantly solve problems. That’s not how we’re made. In fact, we’re made to get upset, sad, hurt, stumble and fall. Because that’s the whole purpose of living – to face problems, learn, adapt, and solve them over the course of time. This is what ultimately molds us into the person we become.

Stop lying to yourself. – You can lie to anyone else in the world, but you can’t lie to yourself. Our lives improve only when we take chances, and the first and most difficult chance we can take is to be honest with ourselves.

Stop putting your own needs on the back burner. – The most painful thing is losing yourself in the process of loving someone too much, and forgetting that you are special too. Yes, help others; but help yourself too. If there was ever a moment to follow your passion and do something that matters to you, that moment is now.

Stop trying to be someone you’re not. – One of the greatest challenges in life is being yourself in a world that’s trying to make you like everyone else. Someone will always be prettier, someone will always be smarter, someone will always be younger, but they will never be you. Don’t change so people will like you. Be yourself and the right people will love the real you.

Stop trying to hold onto the past. – You can’t start the next chapter of your life if you keep re-reading your last one.

Stop being scared to make a mistake. – Doing something and getting it wrong is at least ten times more productive than doing nothing. Every success has a trail of failures behind it, and every failure is leading towards success. You end up regretting the things you did NOT do far more than the things you did.

Stop berating yourself for old mistakes. – We may love the wrong person and cry about the wrong things, but no matter how things go wrong, one thing is for sure, mistakes help us find the person and things that are right for us. We all make mistakes, have struggles, and even regret things in our past. But you are not your mistakes, you are not your struggles, and you are here NOW with the power to shape your day and your future. Every single thing that has ever happened in your life is preparing you for a moment that is yet to come.

Stop trying to buy happiness. – Many of the things we desire are expensive. But the truth is, the things that really satisfy us are totally free – love, laughter and working on our passions.

Stop exclusively looking to others for happiness. – If you’re not happy with who you are on the inside, you won’t be happy in a long-term relationship with anyone else either. You have to create stability in your own life first before you can share it with someone else.



DEBBIE GIBSON

Stop being idle. – Don’t think too much or you’ll create a problem that wasn’t even there in the first place. Evaluate situations and take decisive action. You cannot change what you refuse to confront. Making progress involves risk. Period! You can’t make it to second base with your foot on first.

Stop thinking you’re not ready. – Nobody ever feels 100% ready when an opportunity arises. Because most great opportunities in life force us to grow beyond our comfort zones, which means we won’t feel totally comfortable at first.

Stop getting involved in relationships for the wrong reasons. – Relationships must be chosen wisely. It’s better to be alone than to be in bad company. There’s no need to rush. If something is meant to be, it will happen – in the right time, with the right person, and for the best reason. Fall in love when you’re ready, not when you’re lonely.

Stop rejecting new relationships just because old ones didn’t work. – In life you’ll realize that there is a purpose for everyone you meet. Some will test you, some will use you and some will teach you. But most importantly, some will bring out the best in you.

Stop trying to compete against everyone else. – Don’t worry about what others are doing better than you. Concentrate on beating your own records every day. Success is a battle between YOU and YOURSELF only.

Stop being jealous of others. – Jealousy is the art of counting someone else’s blessings instead of your own.

Stop complaining and feeling sorry for yourself. – Life’s curveballs are thrown for a reason – to shift your path in a direction that is meant for you. You may not see or understand everything the moment it happens, and it may be tough. But reflect back on those negative curveballs thrown at you in the past. You’ll often see that eventually they led you to a better place, person, state of mind, or situation. So smile! Let everyone know that today you are a lot stronger than you were yesterday, and you will be.

Stop holding grudges. – Don’t live your life with hate in your heart. You will end up hurting yourself more than the people you hate. Forgiveness is not saying, “What you did to me is okay.” It is saying, “I’m not going to let what you did to me ruin my happiness forever.” Forgiveness is the answer... let go, find peace, liberate yourself! And remember, forgiveness is not just for other people, it’s for you too. If you must, forgive yourself, move on and try to do better next time.

Stop letting others bring you down to their level. – Refuse to lower your standards to accommodate those who refuse to raise theirs.

Stop wasting time explaining yourself to others. – Your friends don’t need it and your enemies won’t believe it anyway. Just do what you know in your heart is right.

Go ahead, gift yourself! You have my blessing.

Adult education connection



BEVERLY PRATER ASHBY

What does it mean to learn? Learning means adopting an open mind and allowing oneself to be exposed to new experiences and ideas to grow. The excitement people used to experience about the world can be difficult to remember and relearn as adults, but we all need to learn.

While growing up, we typically possess a natural curiosity about what we were learning in school. Yet, as adults, we often overlook the importance of being a lifelong learner.

For learning to occur, individuals need to be open to new concepts and actively seek diverse ways of learning and developing. Many adults have a strong interest in keeping up to date on what is occurring in the world around them and learning how to do certain things more efficiently while keeping their minds sharper as they age. Keeping the mind engaged with obtaining information helps us continually grow in knowledge and increase our skill base.

Within the aspects of continuous learning, one of the most important skills to maintain is problem-solving. To thrive in the present and the future, we must be able to solve real-world problems with accuracy. Another critical skill to possess is adaptability. The world is constantly changing; therefore, we must adopt the ability to be flexible. effort.

Everyone can benefit significantly from learning if we cultivate it as a long-term habit. It is beneficial to have a variety of learning skills and to develop them continuously throughout one’s life. Skills that impact our future come from within us. It is one of the reasons we are who we are. By attaining necessary lifelong learning skills, we can become better workers, learners, and problem solvers.

For anyone who is interested in taking an adult education course in order to brush up on some learning skills or to acquire some new ones, there are many opportunities to be found throughout our region. Southwest Regional Adult Education (SRAE) provides free instruction in Buchanan, Dickenson, Russell, and Tazewell counties. All classes and programs are taught by highly qualified instructors. Learning resources and testing materials will be provided. To find out which programs are currently available as well as the ones that are upcoming, please call SRAE at 276-889-5424.

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Kiosk Ordering Boards – Love Them or Detest Them?

Most likely you are becoming familiar with Digital Ordering Kiosks. They are called lots of things like Self-Serve Kiosks or Order Kiosks or Power Menu Boards and probably various other terms. You may love them, but I don't care for them at all.

Taco Bell, McDonald's and various other eateries have them stationed in many of their stores. On more than one occasion I have tried to place an order the old-fashioned way and have been totally ignored. A couple of times I just got back in my car and ordered in the drive through.

Everything was the same there, no worries. I just simply said "Give me a chicken burrito supreme." I pulled up to the window, paid for my food, received my burrito and drove on my merry way. There have been occasions when some nice soul would come to the counter and take my order. I also make a big deal about thanking the person for taking my order.

Often there are one or two people waiting to use the kiosk. They peck and poke around adding and subtracting the cheese, the sauces, the lettuce, adding something additional and often I start wondering if they are playing some type of Las Vegas game. I am not real impatient but my patience is a bit thin if I'm starving and I am traveling.

There is no perfect world and I like the good old days when you walked into McDonald's and there were three or four nice people standing to take my order.

They took my order for a cheeseburger, fries and a coke, handed me a tray with food on it for a very reasonable price and it was simply fun. Today, it's not fun at many fast-food eateries. It's peck and poke on a screen. They wear me out.

Recently I saw some guy walking out of the men's restroom in front of me. He didn't wash his hands and went



DR. GLENN
MOLLETTE

straight to the kiosk to make an order. How many times every day does this happen? How could these contraptions even come into existence after the days of Covid?

People touch a lot of things. Credit card readers, door handles and the list is endless. Just add the menu ordering kiosks to the list.

I suppose the owners love the kiosks? Are they really making them more money or saving them employee expenses? Are they really working? Have they made their business easier? The fact that I don't care for them is not likely impacting anything.

However, the Hardees and the Burger King around the corner from where I live still take my order at the counter. That's where I find myself navigating when in need of that kind of food. Time will tell if my choices will make any difference.

The Kiosk ordering board may or may not work for you. In a recent survey over 90% of those polled disliked or detested the kiosk ordering boards. Some said they simply chose the drive through or chose restaurants that did not insist customers use a kiosk to order their food.

SWCC Community Chorus recruiting

Southwest Virginia Community College's Community Chorus is recruiting new members for the upcoming season. Singers from throughout the region are invited to join the ensemble and participate in rehearsals and public performances.

The Southwest Virginia Community College Community Chorus has a distinguished history of performing both regionally and nationally. The ensemble has performed by invitation at Duke Chapel in Durham, N.C., Washington National Cathedral in Washington, D.C., and has appeared at numerous venues throughout New York at numerous venues throughout New York.

The Community Chorus welcomes singers with a variety of musical backgrounds and experience levels. Participants will have the opportunity to develop their vocal skills, perform a wide range of choral music, and connect with others who share an interest in singing.

Rehearsals will be held on Mondays at 6:45 p.m., beginning in September, in Room K-180 of the King Community Center on the Southwest Virginia Community College campus. The Community Chorus presents two concerts each year: a Christmas concert in December and a spring concert as part of the Festival of the Arts in April.

Anyone interested in joining the Southwest Virginia Community College Community Chorus is encouraged to contact Director Dr. Joseph Trivette at 276-971-5778 or joseph.trivette@sw.edu to ask questions or discuss rehearsal and membership details.

Manley appointed as executive director of Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission

Governor Abigail Spanberger has appointed David Manley to serve as Executive Director of the Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission.

"Virginians who live and work in Southern and Southwest Virginia face unique challenges and will be served well by an expert who knows the region, who is focused on delivering for these communities, and who is committed to executing a vision to deliver for economies across the region," said Governor Abigail Spanberger. "David Manley understands what these communities need to build a stronger future. He has vast experience in guiding impactful projects, and I am certain that his expertise will be an immense asset as we work together to create good jobs and opportunity in every corner of the Commonwealth."

"The Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission has the responsibility and opportunity to grow and diversify the economy of 40 distinct localities of the Commonwealth," said Secretary of Commerce and Trade Carrie Chenery. "I am delighted to work alongside and fully support David Manley as he leads this organization to advance the next strategic chapter of Southern and Southwest Virginia's story. As a native of and accomplished professional within the region, David brings his dedication to economic, community, and business development together in this role. Through strong collaborations, he will advance Governor Spanberger's clear vision to grow an economy that delivers for every Virginian."

"Virginia's Tobacco Region is 400 miles across, and no single solution fits every corner of it," said David Manley. "The strongest partnerships start by understanding community priorities and capacity. The Commission has been a valuable partner to this region for decades, and I'm committed to making sure it remains effective, community by community. It's an honor to serve the Commonwealth and the people of Southern and Southwest Virginia."

"As the Commission continues its third decade of working with our partners from across the footprint to bring jobs, investment, and resources to Southern and Southwest Virginia, it is critical that we have excellent leadership on staff to guide our efforts," said TRRC Chairman Delegate Will Morefield. "I am excited to work with David in the years ahead and extend my thanks to Governor Spanberger and her team for selecting an excellent leader and native of Southwest Virginia to serve as the Commission's Executive Director."

"Investing in our communities and ensuring they have the resources and support needed to thrive is at the heart of the Commission's mission. David Manley's appointment by Governor Spanberger is proof of our commitment to continue advancing opportunities across Southern and Southwest Virginia," said TRRC Vice-Chair Senator Lashrecse Aird.

"David has a proven track record of delivering results and building strong partnerships that strengthen Virginia's communities. I also want to thank Deputy Director Stephen Versen for his outstanding leadership over the past six months. With David's leadership and the strong foundation Stephen has helped maintain, I am confident the Commission will continue delivering meaningful investments and lasting impact for the communities we serve across Southern and Southwest Virginia."

David Manley is an economic development practitioner with more than a decade of experience working with businesses large and small, local governments, the Commonwealth and its agencies, and public and private sector partners to grow economic opportunity in Southwest Virginia and beyond.

He most recently served as Executive Director of the Joint Industrial Development Authority of Wythe County, Wytheville, and Rural Retreat, where he led business attraction and retention efforts that brought more than \$2 billion in investment to the community.

In 2022, he served as the 40th President of the Virginia Economic Developers Association, and he represents Virginia on the board of directors of the Southern Economic Development Council. David holds the Master Economic Development Practitioner designation and a B.A. in Government from the University of Virginia.

He has a long record of civic leadership in Southwest Virginia, including as founding chair of the nonprofit board that restored the historic Millwald Theatre in downtown Wytheville, co-founder and advisor of Wythe-Bland Young Professionals, and founder and co-chair of the Wytheville Wine Festival.

A native Wythe Countian, David established and operated West Wind Farm Vineyard & Winery for over a dozen years before entering economic development, and he brings a practitioner's perspective shaped by more than a decade leading economic development at the local level to his work at the Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission.

Another letter from your Mountain Cousin

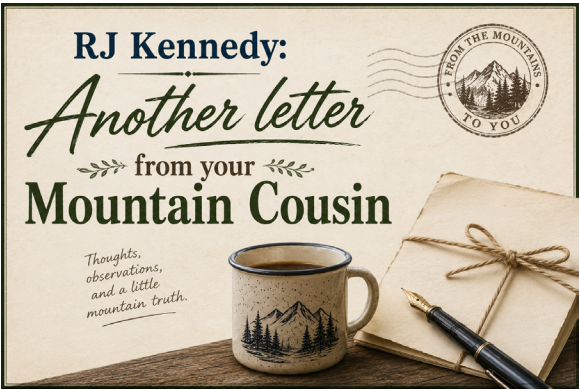
Dear Cousin

And the "rain, rain, rain, came down, down, down, down and fell upon poor Piglet" or so says Winnie the Pooh. And has it ever been raining! It's like, just try to mow between rainstorms over here cuz. The other day here, we had tornado watches and the sun was shining while it was still raining and storming. Thankfully, we didn't have high winds so no trees so far have come down on the mountain. But after our family reunion, cut short by rain, we raced the rain home, grabbed what we needed out of the truck and ran inside. In a matter of minutes a tree (which had been leaning into another tree) across the creek, uprooted and fell down the hill, across the creek, up the bank on the other side and the outer limbs landed on the farm truck.

Thankfully it didn't even break a window or mirror. We left it there and just backed the truck out from under it Sunday morning and cut it up with the grandson's help on Monday. Bob is a good limb puller. We pulled out five good logs, which will make a lot of winter firewood. The trees just keep falling on Cleveland Mountain. I tell the grandkids, don't even think about crossing that mountain if storms are coming. But I'm sure the July rains will stop soon and hot dry August will be here by the time you get this letter.

So now, with the family reunion being over, it's catch up on the farm time. We got over to the USDA in Lebanon to put in for the drought assistance. So many farmers had to buy extra feed and hay this spring as the grass didn't start growing until mid or end of April. We put out extra hay and just kept moving them from pasture to pasture. Our grass still is not where it usually is by this time of year. Our hay didn't produce many bales for the spring cutting either. Over in the holler the cows just kept breaking out of their pastures to get fresh roadside grass. We still haven't found that crazy Black Angus!

We have had folks showing up to look at our spring calves, which are getting close to going to new homes.



And speaking of new homes, someone dropped off a wild young cat here that now has three kittens. We kept trying to catch her and get her fixed. Russell County needs a shelter as soon as possible. We are having a lot of trouble around here with people coming out into the country and dropping off literally boxes full of kittens. County folks are overwhelmed with cats and kittens dropped on their doorsteps. And they don't have the money to spay and neuter all the cats dropped on their doorsteps. And these cats start having more kittens, it's crazy! So if you know some sweet little kid who could use a kitten, let me know (columnistrjk@gmail.com). I have three that are now eating food who need a home. Three big roosters here need a home as well. (Or they would make a good free dinner for a poor family)

So for now cuz, we'll just keep mowing, moving cows to new pastures until the grass runs out. Perhaps the weather will cool down soon and we'll get some fencing done or some more cedars cut over in the holler. School will start soon and there will be only evening hours for the kids to do farm work.

Until next week, keep looking up.

RJ Kennedy

Happenings of the Drill Senior Citizens

By JANIE THOMAS

July 24 was the latest meeting of the Drill Senior Citizens. We gave our potato peelers and fryers the day off, so when we arrived everyone was just sitting and enjoying visiting with each other.

Betty Sue Hess called the meeting to order. She read the prayer requests, then Tommy Meade opened devotions with prayer and Gary Thomas read the 23rd Psalm from his Bible.

After devotions Betty Sue called the roll. We had 31 members present today. No visitors. Welcome to our newest member Phyllis Miller. Glad to have Norman and Linda back with us today.

We then stood and made our Pledge of Allegiance to our flag. I then gave the financial report.

There was very little prep for lunch today, so Tommy Meade sang "Going Over Jordan". Then Betsy Newton sang "Happy Birthday" to our members who had celebrated a birthday since our last meeting. She then led everyone in singing, "God Bless America" and she ended our singing for this meeting with "As I Have Loved You".

Our menu today was sandwiches and sides. We decided it was too hot to cook. Betsy Newton asked the blessing over the food today. As always, our tables were full of good food, all kinds of sandwich meats, cheeses, and breads. Lots of good condiments to make your sandwich just to your liking. Plenty of chips and sides to go with your sandwich. The dessert counters were full of good sweets.

After lunch was over and clean up was complete, it was bingo time! Don and Betty Sue had to leave early today so I did the number calling for us to play. I am sorry but I forgot who gave out the cards and brought in the prizes. Thanks to whoever did this. If I don't write things down anymore, I forget. Anyone else have this problem?

Our winners today were Kathy Noe had her Birthday on her Card. These members won one game each: Ron Jackson, Shelia Hale, Freda Sweeney, Norman Wilson, Nancy Childress, Linda Wilson, Kathy Noe, and Linda Elder. These lucky winners won three games each: Thelma Massie and Georgia Johnson. Glad to see Georgia back today. We miss our members when they are out. We really had a good time playing bingo, even though it was hard not having Don Hess there to tell me how to call the numbers!

Thank You to Joyce Baldwin for taking notes today. Barbara was sick and couldn't be with us today.

Our next meeting is scheduled for August 14, beginning at 11 a.m. Our menu will be potluck. Everyone welcome! Come be with us, we will make you smile.

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

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Spanberger restores voting rights to more than 60,000 Virginians

The announcement comes ahead of the November referendum that would make rights restoration automatic after release from incarceration.

By **MARKUS SCHMIDT**
Virginia Mercury

Gov. Abigail Spanberger has restored voting and other civil rights to more than 60,000 Virginians since taking office in January, reversing the more restrictive restoration process adopted by her predecessor and reopening voting access for thousands of people with past felony convictions, her administration said Friday.

The 66,085 Virginians whose rights have been restored may now vote, serve on juries, run for public office and become notaries public. The announcement comes about seven weeks before early voting begins for the 2026 midterm elections, which include a constitutional referendum that could largely remove Virginia governors from the restoration process.

“The right to vote is foundational to who we are as Americans. As a member of Congress, as a candidate for governor, and in the months since I took office, I have heard from many Virginians who have shared their personal stories of redemption with me — and heartfelt reflections of the moment their voting rights were restored by previous governors,” Spanberger said in a statement.

Virginia is one of just three states whose constitutions permanently disenfranchise people convicted of felonies unless the governor restores their rights. The state constitution gives governors broad discretion over both eligibility and the restoration process.

Governors of both parties streamlined the process over the decade before former Gov. Glenn Youngkin took office in 2022.

Republican Gov. Bob McDonnell began expanding restorations, a policy later accelerated by Democratic Govs. Terry McAuliffe and Ralph Northam. McAuliffe restored the rights to more than 173,000 people during his term, while Northam restored the rights to more than 126,000. But in 2016, the Supreme



(Photo by Markus Schmidt/
Virginia Mercury)

Gov. Abigail Spanberger speaks to reporters in Richmond. Spanberger announced Friday that her administration has restored voting and other civil rights to more than 66,000 Virginians since she took office in January.

Court of Virginia struck down executive orders from McAuliffe that sought to broadly restore civil rights to approximately 206,000 people who had completed their prison sentences and supervised release. The court ruled that governors must consider each case individually rather than issue blanket restorations.

Youngkin later eliminated the state’s streamlined process, requiring people with felony convictions to apply individually to regain their rights.

Although his administration said every application would receive an individualized review, Democrats and voting rights advocates criticized the pace of restorations and the lack of publicly disclosed criteria.

Spanberger’s administration said it has restored both the application review process and proactive outreach to identify eligible Virginians. Officials also removed questions added during the Youngkin era that they described as “unnecessary.”

Secretary of the Commonwealth Candi Mundon King said her office reviews every restoration individu-

ally while working with law enforcement agencies to verify eligibility.

“Today is an important day for the commonwealth and the more than 66,000 Virginians who now have their voting rights restored — in many cases, after waiting multiple years for a fair review,” Mundon King said in a statement.

“Over the past six months, our work has been guided by Governor Spanberger’s deep belief that Virginians who served their time deserve their civil rights. That is why our team reviews every individual who has their voting rights restored, working with our law enforcement partners to make sure we get it right.”

Meanwhile, thousands of voter registration applications from Virginians with certain past felony convictions remained pending as of June while the state worked to comply with a federal court order changing its registration process.

It was not immediately clear how many of those applicants, if any, are included in the 66,085 rights restorations announced Friday.

The referendum set to go before voters Nov. 3 would amend the state Constitution to automatically restore voting rights to people convicted of felonies once they are released from incarceration, largely removing governors from the restoration process.

The amendment cleared the General Assembly in two consecutive sessions, separated by the 2025 legislative election as required for constitutional changes. Lawmakers approved it for a second time during the 2026 legislative session, and Spanberger signed legislation in February, placing it and other proposed amendments on the November ballot.

Similar proposals have surfaced repeatedly over the decades, although Virginia voters rejected one in 1982 by 63% to 37%. That measure would have allowed for civil rights to be

restored under new rules established in state law.

But more recent polling has shown greater support for a more sweeping change. A 2025 Christopher Newport University survey found that 63% of registered voters supported or strongly supported automatically restoring voting rights to people who have completed their prison sentences.

Civil rights advocates have also emphasized the origin of Virginia’s felony disenfranchisement provision, which dates back to the state’s 1901-02 constitutional convention, where

white political leaders adopted voting rights restrictions intended to suppress Black political participation.

“This fall, voters can cast their ballots for Virginia to no longer strip so many of our neighbors of their fundamental rights — a shameful relic of our Jim Crow past,” Spanberger said Friday. “I hope Virginians will join me in voting yes.”

House Speaker Don Scott, D-Portsmouth, whose civil rights were restored by McDonnell after a federal drug conviction, thanked Spanberger for ending what he called “the restoration of

rights gridlock” of the last four years.

“Today’s action is an important step forward, but it cannot be the final step,” Scott said. “A future governor should never be able to reverse a fundamental right with the stroke of a pen.”

He urged Virginians to support the proposed constitutional amendment in November, saying voting rights should no longer be subject to changing governors or political administrations.

Early voting begins Sept. 18, with Election Day set for Nov. 3.

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Spanberger administration seeks public input on new energy plan

By **SHANNON HECKT**
Virginia Mercury

Every four years, Virginia law requires the governor’s administration to develop a new energy plan outlining the commonwealth’s energy needs and how the state intends to meet its power generation goals.

Chief Energy Officer Josephus Allmond, Secretary of Commerce and Trade Carrie Chenery and Department of Energy representatives have been hosting invite-only stakeholder meetings across the state to gather input on how the administration can shape its policies and how Virginia can meet its net-zero clean energy mark.

“It’s really just designed to basically provide a 10-year roadmap looking at how we’re going to hit the 2045 net zero (goals) across all sectors,” Allmond said.

A public meeting will be held in Petersburg on Aug. 3 at the public library at 5:30 pm. Comments submitted at the meeting, along with responses gathered through an online survey, will be considered as the administration drafts the plan.

“But our energy future should not — must not — just be written in Richmond,” Gov. Abigail Spanberger said in a news release. “I want to hear from Virginians across every corner of the commonwealth, and I encourage everyone who pays an ener-

gy bill in Virginia to make their voice heard.”

In addition to public input, the governor’s plan is developed in consultation with the State Corporation Commission, the Department of Environmental Quality and other state agencies.

Spanberger is aiming to address high energy costs as demand for power continues to grow across the commonwealth. She has touted an “all of the above” energy strategy that includes renewable sources such as solar and wind, while also expressing interest in small modular reactors and maintaining fossil fuel sources when needed.

To offset carbon emissions from natural gas generation, Spanberger pushed for and secured Virginia’s return to the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, a multi-state carbon allowance auction.

Unlike the Integrated

Resource Plan that utilities must submit to the SCC outlining how they intend to build enough infrastructure to meet projected demand, the governor’s plan offers more flexibility in determining how to achieve the net-zero target established in state law, Allmond said.

Under the Virginia Clean Economy Act, the state’s major utilities are also mandated to retire their carbon-emitting power sources by 2050, with some exceptions to maintain grid reliability.

“The IRP is not strictly on getting to net zero by 2045. There’s still work arounds in the Clean Economy Act, and so they’ve been relying on that reliability exception,” Allmond said. “That doesn’t really exist here, and so, this is really showing ways to get to net zero.”

The final report on the 2026 energy plan will be released Oct. 1.

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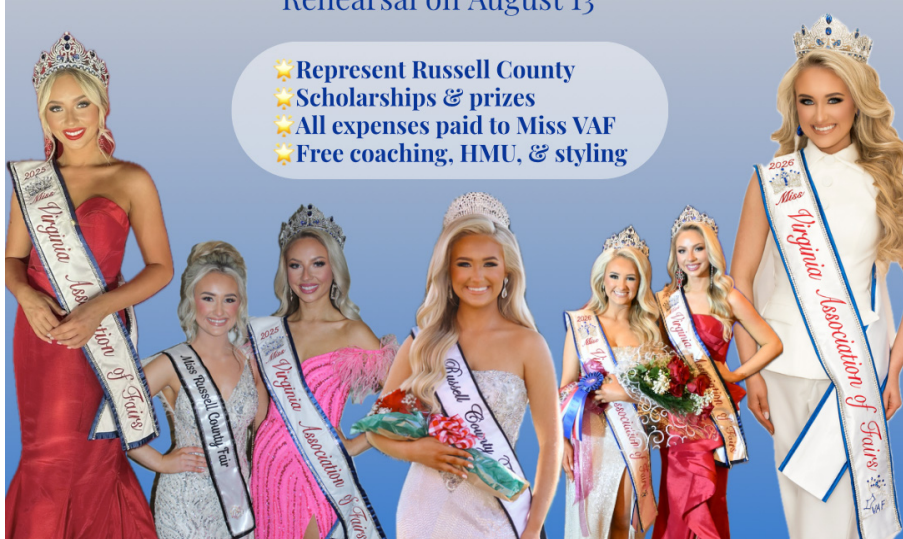
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Stout invites Tigers to NY Giants camp

Honaker's Jordan Stout invited the Honaker football team to watch the New York Giants' practice. The Giants are currently holding their training camp at The Greenbrier Resort in White Sulfur Springs, West Virginia. Stout (No. 15 in blue, in the middle), a graduate of Honaker, signed with the Giants during the off-season.

Q&A with Lebanon head football coach Hunter Norris

By ANTHONY STEVENS
anthony@virginiamediainc.com

Hunter Norris has compiled a 15-8 record in his two years at the helm of the Pioneers. Lebanon was hit hard with graduation but still has high aspirations. Lebanon News Sportswriter Anthony Stevens recently spoke with Coach Norris about the football program and the upcoming season.

Q: After approximately 14 departures due to graduation, is the plan to rebuild or reload?

A: We're looking to reload. We lost some big names from last year that everybody knows, but we also have some kids coming up in the program who have been playing on our middle school and JV teams. They've developed really well, and there are going to be some guys who played backup roles to those we

lost and saw some playing time over the past couple of years, especially late last year with injuries. We're excited to see them step in and see what they do. It's that next-man-up mentality for us, and I think we're going to surprise some people with what we're able to accomplish.

Q: You have two years under your belt as a head coach now. What's the most important thing you've learned in those two years?

A: The most important thing is definitely the relationships—not just with the kids, but with your staff—and coming to an understanding of not trying to see what kids can't do, but what they can do, and putting kids in positions where they can be successful. Don't ask kids to do something they might not be good at. Our staff has done a really good job. They make my job easier as the head coach. We've had a

really good run of kids; we've got a good staff, and hopefully we can keep that trend going and put kids in the right spots to make plays.

Q: You mentioned your coaching staff. There is always turnover each year. Who will be helping you this season?

A: We've got DJ Hall, our defensive coordinator. Patrick Wade came over from Castlewood. He's my associate head coach and coaches the wide receivers and defensive backs. Matt Jessee coaches our running backs and linebackers. Barry Boothe coaches our offensive line and helps on the defensive line with DJ. Keith Stiltner will be a volunteer this year, helping us out. We brought Brian Dillon back. He was on staff before I got here three years ago with Darrell Taylor. He's decided to come back after stepping

SEE HUNTER NORRIS | 4B



Layne Jessee (44) carries a Richlands defender last season in the Pioneers win on Harry Stuart Field.

PRESTON BALL | For the Lebanon News

Alexis Ivey Named UVA-WISE Head Volleyball Coach Becomes the Twelfth Head Coach in UVA Wise Program History

WISE -- The University of Virginia's College at Wise (UVA Wise) Director of Athletics Kendall Rainey named Alexis Ivey as the new Head Volleyball Coach. Ivey comes to Wise from Converse University in Spartanburg, S.C. where she was the head volleyball coach for four years.

Ivey led Converse to two consecutive 20-win seasons in 2024 and 2025. The Valkyries won the Conference Carolinas Championship in 2024 and earned their first NCAA Tournament appearance. Ivey led her team to the Northwest Division title in 2025 and a second overall finish in Conference Carolinas. They also appeared in the Southeast Regional Rankings twice during the 2025 season and fin-

ished 10th in region RPI.

During her tenure at Converse, she coached multiple All-Conference performers, including Mackenzie Day, who was D2CAA third-team All-America and Conference Carolinas Defensive Player of the Year in 2024, and her teams have ranked nationally in several statistical categories, including fourth in digs, 12th in service aces, and 23rd in kills in 2024.

Prior to Converse, Ivey served as head volleyball coach at USC-Salkehatchie and as an assistant volleyball coach at Greensboro College. She has also coached club volleyball for Champion Volleyball Club and currently the Stars

Carolinas 15 Boys.

"It is an exciting time for our volleyball program. We are thrilled to welcome Coach Ivey to UVA Wise. Coach Ivey is a competitor, and her success in the NCAA DII Southeast Region, her determination, and her plans for the program align perfectly with our vision of continuing to elevate UVA Wise volleyball," stated Rainey.

Ivey said, "I'm extremely excited and grateful for the opportunity to join UVA Wise. I want to thank Dr. Rainey for this opportunity and for trusting me to lead the volley-

SEE ALEXIS IVEY | 4B

Relay for Life motorcycle ride announced

By SHAWN STREET
shawn@virginiamediainc.com

The Relay for Life of the Clinch River Valley has announced its second annual Motorcycle Ride. The ride will be held on Sept. 12 with a rain date of Sept. 19.

Registration will be Sept. 12 at the Russell County Government Center in Lebanon, 139 Highlands Drive.

Registration will begin at 10 a.m. with the ride beginning at 11 a.m. The registration fee is \$30 per driver and \$15 per passenger.

Pre-registration is available by calling 276-701-6378. Pre-registration fees are \$25 for drivers and \$10 for passengers.

Route details for the Relay for Life of the Clinch River Valley Motorcycle Ride will be released at a later date on Facebook.



The second annual Relay for Life Motorcycle Ride is scheduled for Sept. 12.

CLASSIFIEDS

CEMETERY LOTS

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

LEGAL NOTICE

VIRGINIA: IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE COUNTY OF RUSSELL, VIRGINIA, a Political Subdivision of the Commonwealth of Virginia, Complainant, v. T M MULLEN, ET AL. Case No. CL26-683 ORDER OF PUBLICATION

The object of this suit is to enforce the lien of the Complainant, County of Russell, Virginia, for delinquent real estate taxes against certain real property located in the County of Russell, Virginia, described as follows: Tax Map No. 165R-176 Account No. 6283 All that certain tract, piece or parcel of land, situate, lying and being two (2) miles west of Mew, in Castlewood Magisterial District of Russell County, Virginia, on the north side of and adjacent to Virginia State Primary Highway No. 66, and described more particularly as follows:

Beginning at an oak on north side of the State Highway, following State Highway in a southwesterly direction to top of hill; thence following the State Highway in a northwesterly direction to the line of the tract of land now or formerly owned by George Hall; thence following the line of the George Hall tract straight up the hollow to the corner of the tract of land now or formerly owned by J. T. Osborne; thence following the line of the J. T. Osborne tract in a northeasterly direction to the State Highway; thence following up the State Highway south to starting point at oak tree, and containing 18.6 acres, more or less.

Being the same property conveyed to T. M. Mullen and Blanche Mullen, his wife, by Deed from Luellen Bush Kennedy, widow, dated September 14, 1962 and recorded among the land records of the Circuit Court of Russell County, Virginia on October 24, 1962 in Deed Book 183 at Page 418.

This description is made subject to all easements, conditions, agreements, restrictions, and reservations of record which affect the property herein described including but not limited to those recorded in Deed Book 256 at Page 182, and Deed Book 257 at Page 680.

IT APPEARING that an Affidavit has been made and filed stating that due diligence has been used, without effect, to ascertain the identity and location of certain parties to be served, that the last known addresses for the Respondents herein are as follows: T M Mullen also known as Tarleton M. Mullen, who is believed to be deceased and whose last known address is 100 Shockoe Slip, Richmond, Virginia 23219; Blanche Mullen also known as Virginia Blanche Mullen, who is believed to be deceased and whose last known address is unknown; Jennifer Mullen Harrison, whose last known address is 792 Terra Alta Drive, Aylett, Virginia 23009; and that any officers, heirs, devisees, and successors in title of the Respondent named herein are made parties Respondent to

LEGAL NOTICES

this action individually and/or by the general description of Parties Unknown, it is hereby ORDERED that the parties herein and all Parties Unknown and/or whose location cannot be ascertained appear on or before September 8, 2026 in the Clerk's Office of the Circuit Court of the County of Russell, Virginia, and do what may be necessary to protect their interests in this cause. Entered on the 20th day of July, 2026.

Carlee Horton
Master D. Clerk I Ask For This:
John A. Rife, Esq. (VSB No. 45805)
Jeffrey A. Scharf, Esq. (VSB No. 30591)
Mark K. Ames, Esq. (VSB No. 27409)
Andrew M. Neville, Esq. (VSB No. 86372)
Gregory L. Haynes, Esq. (VSB No. 37158)
Seth R. Konopasek, Esq. (VSB No. 97065)
Garrett W. Patton, Esq. (VSB No. 98345)
Michelle W. Clayton, Esq. (VSB No. 81365)
Lauralei K. Singsank, Esq. (VSB No. 100611)
G. Andrew Hall, Esq. (VSB No. 24114)
Taxing Authority Consulting Services, PC
P.O. Box 31800
Henrico, Virginia 23294-1800
Phone: (804) 506-3102
Facsimile: (804) 545-2378
TACS No.: 158549
LN-07-29,08-5,12,19;2026

NOTICE OF TRUSTEE'S SALE

1012 Purcell Road, Lebanon, Virginia 24266

In execution of that certain deed of trust in the original principal amount of \$63,280.00 dated September 30, 1994 and recorded among the land records of Russell County, in Deed Book 427, Page 421 and subsequent modifications or re-recordings, if any, as amended by an instrument appointing the undersigned as Substituted Trustee dated in the land records of Russell County, Virginia, default having been made in the payment of the indebtedness thereby secured and having been requested to do so by the holder of the note evidencing the said indebtedness, the undersigned Substituted Trustee will offer for sale at public auction in front of the Russell County Courthouse located at 53 Main Street, Lebanon, VA 24226, on: August 13, 2026 at 11:00 AM
The property described in said deed of trust located at the above street address, and more particularly described as:
The following described tract or parcel of land with improvements thereon, to-wit:
All that certain tract or parcel of land, situate, lying and being in the Lebanon Magisterial District of Russell County, Virginia, in the Crossroads Community, and designated as Lot No. Fourteen (14), as shown on a plat prepared by D. R. Price Engineering & Land Surveying, Inc., dated March 14, 1994, entitled "Russell Hills Subdivision", which is of record in the Russell County Circuit Court Clerk's Office in Plat Cabinet 1, at Slide 217-G, and being more particularly described as follows:
Beginning at an iron pin set in the northern right of way line of State Route No. 674,

LEGAL NOTICES

and in the southwest corner of Lot No. 15. thence with the common boundary line of Lot No. 14 and Lot No. 15 S 25 30 18 W (reversed) 251.89 feet to an iron pin in the northwest corner of Lot No. 15 and in the line of Lot No. 17; thence, with the common boundary line of Lot No. 17 S 64 29 42 E (reversed) 100 feet to an iron pin set in the northeast corner of Lot No. 13 and in the boundary line of Lot No. 17; thence with the common boundary line of Lot No. 13 S 25 30 18 W 226.93 feet to an iron pin set in the northern boundary line of State Route N. 674; thence with the northern boundary line of State Route No. 674 N 50 29 00 W (reversed) 103.07 feet to the point of Beginning.
TERMS OF SALE: Cash or certified funds. A non-refundable deposit of ten percent (10%) of the successful bid price, payable in cash or by certified or cashier's check to the undersigned will be required of the successful bidder at time of sale. Terms of sale to be complied with within 14 days from date of sale or deposit will be forfeit and property will be resold at costs of defaulting purchaser. All real estate taxes to be adjusted as of date of sale. Seller shall not be responsible for any costs incurred by the purchaser in connection with their purchase or settlement, including, without limitation, state and local recording fees, title insurance or research, or any other costs of purchaser's acquisition. The property and the improvements thereon will be sold as is, without representations or warranties of any kind. The sale is subject to all other liens, encumbrances, conditions, easements and restrictions, if any, superior to the aforesaid deed of trust and lawfully affecting the property. Trustee shall have no duty to obtain possession for purchaser. All risks of casualty pass to successful bidder at conclusion of bidding. Sale is subject to post-sale confirmation that the borrower did not file for protection under the U.S. Bankruptcy Code prior to the sale, as well as to post-sale confirmation and audit of the status of the loan with the loan servicer including, but not limited to, determination of whether the borrower(s) entered into any repayment agreement, reinstated or paid off the loan prior to the 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 the Purchaser's deposit without interest. Additional terms to be announced at the sale.
FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:
Terra Abstract Virginia, Inc. 1581 Main Street Suite 200 Warrington, PA 18976 (215) 572-8111, M-F Between 8:00AM - 5 P.M. (VA202500000126)
In the event of postponement of the sale, which may be done at the discretion of the trustee, the date of the postponed sale will be announced at the sale. No new or additional notice will be provided other than the announcement at the sale.
LN-7-15-4t

NOTICE OF TRUSTEE'S

LEGAL NOTICES

SALE

830 Edgar Drive, Lebanon, Virginia 24266

In execution of that certain deed of trust in the original principal amount of \$57,280.00 dated October 17, 1994 and recorded among the land records of Russell County, in Deed Book 428, Page 003 and subsequent modifications or re-recordings, if any, as amended by an instrument appointing the undersigned as Substituted Trustee dated in the land records of Russell County, Virginia, default having been made in the payment of the indebtedness thereby secured and having been requested to do so by the holder of the note evidencing the said indebtedness, the undersigned Substituted Trustee will offer for sale at public auction at the Front Doors of the Russell County Courthouse located at 53 Main Street, Lebanon, VA 24226, on: August 13, 2026 @ 11:00 AM

The property described in said deed of trust located at the above street address, and more particularly described as:

The following described property located in the County of Russell, State of Virginia All that certain tract, piece or parcel of land containing 0.372 acres, more or less, situate in the Town of Lebanon, Lebanon Magisterial District of Russell County, Va., on the north side of but not adjacent to U. S. Highway No. 19, and being more particularly described as follows:

Beginning at an iron pin in the northwestern line of the unnamed street, and being the southwest corner of the 0.459 acre lot conveyed to Clarence Lee Wilson by deed dated February 5, 1964; thence with one line of the Wilson lot N 24 44 W 200' to an iron pin; thence, reversed S 64 04 W 81.1' to an iron pin on the northeast side of a 30' unnamed street; thence with one line of the unnamed street S 24.44 E 200' to an iron pin; thence continuing with one line of the unnamed 30' street, reversed N 64 04 E 81.1' to the iron pin, the point of beginning, containing 0.372 acres, be the same, more or less, together with a right of ingress and egress to and from said lot from the northwestern line of U.S. Highway No. 19, along and over a 40' street, a distance of 690'; thence leaving the said 40' wide street, and in a southwesterly course over a 30' unnamed street to the property herein conveyed. Property Address: 830 Edgar Drive Lebanon, VA 24266
Tax ID: 104R 3681
TERMS OF SALE: Cash or certified funds. A non-refundable deposit of ten percent (10%) of the successful bid price, payable in cash or by certified or cashier's check to the undersigned will be required of the successful bidder at time of sale. Terms of sale to be complied with within 14 days from date of sale or deposit will be forfeit and property will be resold at costs of defaulting purchaser. All real estate taxes to be adjusted as of date of sale. Seller shall not be responsible for any costs incurred by the purchaser in connection with their purchase or settlement, in-

LEGAL NOTICES

cluding, without limitation, state and local recording fees, title insurance or research, or any other costs of purchaser's acquisition. The property and the improvements thereon will be sold as is, without representations or warranties of any kind. The sale is subject to all other liens, encumbrances, conditions, easements and restrictions, if any, superior to the aforesaid deed of trust and lawfully affecting the property. Trustee shall have no duty to obtain possession for purchaser. All risks of casualty pass to successful bidder at conclusion of bidding. Sale is subject to post-sale confirmation that the borrower did not file for protection under the U.S. Bankruptcy Code prior to the sale, as well as to post-sale confirmation and audit of the status of the loan with the loan servicer including, but not limited to, determination of whether the borrower(s) entered into any repayment agreement, reinstated or paid off the loan prior to the 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 the Purchaser's deposit without interest. Additional terms to be announced at the sale.
FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:
Terra Abstract Virginia, Inc. 1581 Main Street Suite 200 Warrington, PA 18976 (215) 572-8111, M-F Between 8:00AM - 5 P.M. (VA202500000128)
In the event of postponement of the sale, which may be done at the discretion of the trustee, the date of the postponed sale will be announced at the sale. No new or additional notice will be provided other than the announcement at the sale.
LN-7-15-4t

PUBLIC NOTICE APPLICATION FOR REVISION TO COAL SURFACE MINING/NPDES PERMIT NO. 1302285/0082285 UNDER CHAPTER 19, TITLE 45.1 OF THE CODE OF VIRGINIA PUBLICATION NUMBER: 05RSY26 APPLICATION NUMBER: 1011925

Blackjewel, L.L.C. of 1051 Main Street, Milton, WV 25541 is applying to the Virginia Division of Mined Land Repurposing for a Revision of Permit 1302285. This revision concerns changing part of the permit area to a post mining land use of Industrial – Manufacturing Area. The presently

approved land use and acreage is 51.68 acres of hayland/pastureland. The revision proposes land uses and acreages as follows: 5.14 acres of hayland/pastureland and 46.54 acres of Industrial – Manufacturing Area. The revision application also proposes to keep sedimentation structures #001, #002, #003, #004, Basin 6, and Basin 7 as permanent structures after mining permit release. This Facility is located approximately 3 miles West of the town of Swords Creek, off Virginia Rt. 67, in Russell County, VA located on the 7.5-minute Honaker Quadrangle map at SPC N 3,552634.760 and E 10,479,651.953 (Virginia NAD83 South Feet Coordinates). The Permit covers 51.68 acres. Drainage and waste water resulting from the permitted operation will be discharged as follows:

Discharge points 003, 004, and 006 discharge into unnamed tributaries into the Clinch River. No new discharge points are being added in this revision. The Post Mining Land Use Map showing the permit area is attached in Section 21.2 of this application. The NPDES discharge locations may be viewed on the Surface Water Hydrology Map in Section 21.2 in this application.

Any person whose interests are or may be adversely affected by the proposed revision, or an Officer, or Head of any Federal, State, or local government agency or authority may within 30 days of (August 12, 2026 submit written comments or objections to the Division of Mined Land Repurposing Program concerning the proposed revision; and may also request, in writing, that the Division hold an Informal Conference concerning the application. A request for an informal conference shall follow the requirements of 4 VAC 25-130-773.13c of the Virginia Coal Surface Mining Reclamation Regulations. A copy of the Application materials is available electronically for public inspection at <https://www.energy.virginia.gov/dmlrinquiry/frmMain.aspx>. All correspondence concerning the application should be submitted to the attention of the Mined Land Repurposing Program (Attention: Permit Section), at 3405 Mountain Empire Road; Big Stone Gap, Virginia 24219. Written comments and a request for an informal conference may be e-mailed to the Division at repurposingpublicnotice@energy.virginia.gov. Questions concerning the application review process may be directed to the Permit Section at (276) 523-8160. LNREV - 07-22, 29, 08-5, 12;2026



We are pledged to the letter and spirit of Virginia's and HUD's equal opportunity housing policies. Virginia's fair housing law makes it illegal to advertise any preference, limitation or discrimination based on race, color, religion, national origin, 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 opportunity basis. For more information about Virginia'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.

FAIR DAYS

WORD SEARCH



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

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

WORDS

- APPLES
- BLUE RIBBON
- CARNIVAL
- CAROUSEL
- CHURRO
- COASTER
- CONCERT
- CORNDOG
- COTTON CANDY
- EXHIBIT
- FERRIS WHEEL
- FRIES
- FUNNEL CAKE
- GAMES
- GRAND STAND
- JUDGES
- LEMONADE
- LIVESTOCK
- MIDWAY
- POPCORN
- PRIZE
- QUILT
- RACING
- TRACTOR



ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20

You're pure rocket fuel this week, Aries. Charge ahead with all of your bold ideas. Your charisma is off the charts right now. Use it before your energy starts to wane.

TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21

Treat yourself to something delicious and expensive this week, Taurus. Just do not blame the cosmos when you get the receipt for this luxury.

GEMINI – May 22/Jun 21

Say yes to spontaneous plans this week, Gemini. Your brain is going a mile a minute, so you may need someone along for the ride to keep you grounded.

CANCER – Jun 22/Jul 22

Cancer, right now home is your fortress, so create a welcoming space to relax and recharge. You may want to spend some time in the kitchen baking up something delicious.

LEO – Jul 23/Aug 23

The spotlight is on you this week, Leo. Shine as brightly as you can, post that selfie and own the room you walk into. Be grateful to those who helped get you to the top.

VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22

All of your organizational superpowers will be activated this week, Virgo. Tackle that messy drawer you have been putting off or conquer a chaotic schedule.

LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23

Libra, romance and fun are in the air for you. Your charm level is very high this week, and you may have a lot of people circling in your orbit as a result.

SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22

Scorpio, you will dig out all of the secrets this week like a super sleuth. Although you are on the hunt for information, remember to keep these pursuits lighthearted.

SAGITTARIUS – Nov 23/Dec 21

Your adventure mode is engaged, Sagittarius. It's time to book the trip, try an exotic dish or say something wild.

CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20

Reward yourself with something that makes you feel important, Capricorn. It may be different depending on the day, and only you know what you desire.

AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Feb 18

Someone is ready to hear any wild ideas you can come up with, Aquarius. Tap into any genius that arises in your brain and share it with your close crew.

PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20

This week is about dreamy and magical vibes, Pisces. It's the perfect time to create art, fall in love with a song or float through the week.

FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

AUGUST 2

J.D Vance, Vice President (42)

AUGUST 3

Tom Brady, Athlete (49)

AUGUST 4

Meghan Markle, Duchess (45)

AUGUST 5

Olivia Holt, Actress (29)

AUGUST 6

Michelle Yeoh, Actress (64)

AUGUST 7

Wayne Knight, Actor (71)

AUGUST 8

Shawn Mendes, Singer (28)

SUDOKU

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

Level: Intermediate

WORD SCRAMBLE

Rearrange the letters to spell something pertaining to fairs.

E K C I T T

Answer: Ticket

GUESS WHO ?

I am a musician born in California on August 3, 1963. I learned to play various instruments after being inspired by the band Aerosmith growing up. I am a cofounder of one of the most popular heavy metal bands of all time.

Answer: James Hetfield

CRYPTO FUN

Solve the code to discover words related to fairs. Each number corresponds to a letter. (Hint: 15 = R)

- A. 10 3 14 15
Clue: Fun outdoor gathering
- B. 5 3 15 23 14 22 3 8
Clue: Event with rides and attractions
- C. 15 14 17 7
Clue: Amusement
- D. 22 7 23 17 1 15
Clue: Sells something

Answers: A. fair B. carnival C. ride D. vendor

PUZZLE SOLUTION

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

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

SUDOKU SOLUTION

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

HUNTER NORRIS

FROM PAGE 1B

down as the girls' soccer head coach, so he'll volunteer and help us on varsity. Jared Slate is our assistant offensive line coach and will help with the middle school team's offensive line. Dakota Hall has been with me the whole time here. He's DJ's brother. He helps with linebackers and special teams. I think that's everybody.

Q: Were you pleased with the participation and activities in the off-season?

A: I thought we had a really good turnout. We had at least thirty-five kids here for most of it, and we got a lot of really good work in. The kids are excited. There's still a lot of hype behind the program and excitement among people who have been waiting for their opportunity. They're excited to see what they do on Friday nights. That's been a theme throughout the summertime—they're ready to work. They're really excited to get started, get camp rolling, and get to that first scrimmage.

Q: A four-year starter, Mike Reece, is at UVA-Wise. Freshman Will Jessee will be behind center. I know you won't give away any secrets, but how will the offense change?

A: Will was in a really good position because he sat behind Mike for two years and learned from him. Mike was a great teammate and leader who helped Will develop at quarterback. He's really not a freshman because he's sat behind Mike for two years, learned, and played middle school ball for us for two years. He's got a lot of development. He's been our scout team quarterback and has gone against our first-team defense. He's got some experience playing and going against varsity guys in practice. I'm really excited about his development. He's come a long way since we started, even just this summer. In our last seven-on-seven versus Tennessee High, I thought he did a lot of really good things. We only dropped one or two passes in that seven-on-seven. That's from him coming in extra with some guys throwing and catching, developing that chemistry. I think we're still going to be able to throw the ball successfully. We might not pitch it around the yard sixty times like we used to, but he's got the arm and the knowledge to still be a threat in the pass game and move the chains that way. He also brings athleticism to the quarterback position. If he makes one guy miss, he's got the speed to take it to the house. We're going to try to utilize that and tailor the offense to his strengths because he's going to be the guy running it. We've got to change it a little bit to fit what he does well—putting him in the best position to be successful given



Hunter Norris

ANTHONY STEVENS | Lebanon News

his athletic ability.

Q: Big brother Layne Jessee is getting D1 looks. What do you look for from Layne in his junior season? He's been a huge factor on both sides of the ball.

A: I think Layne will continue to be that for us. He's our utility guy. He can play everything—quarterback, running back, and all the skill positions. He's likely to line up at all of those by the last game of the season and play a snap at every skill position for us. He'll line up everywhere for us on defense as well. He can play any position. When you have a guy like that, you look at who you're playing that week and see where you might want to put him to be most successful and get the most out of him. That's kind of his role for us. We're excited to have him and his brother on the field together. They're both very similar athletes who can play any position anywhere. We're blessed to have those guys as part of our program.

Q: With the departure of the seniors, other than the Jessee's, who are you looking to step into leadership roles?

A: We're looking to our offensive line. Those guys have a lot of experience and have played a lot of football games. Leadership for us doesn't have an age or a position, so anybody can step up and be a leader when their moment's called. Some of the guys we're looking to step into those roles are Hayden Sears on the offensive line, Connor Griffith—another senior who's played a ton of games for us—and Wesley Alexander. He's just a sophomore, but with his work ethic, attitude, and the way he's played, especially how he's attacked this off-season—going to camps, being here every day, being vocal, and doing it the right way—he's a young guy who's earned the right to be a leader on this team by his actions. Those three guys, especially on the offensive line, have a lot of games under their belt, and they're guys we're really looking to step up and be leaders for the team.

Q: Lebanon will be moving to Class 1 next fall.

There is one more year in the Southwest District and Region 2D. Two big dogs, Graham and Union, are already on your schedule. Who do you expect to be the other powerhouses in the district and region?

A: 2A is loaded from top to bottom. Everybody has really good players and coaches, and they're all coached very well. It's a privilege to be in the Southwest District because the competition is very strong week in and week out. We're very proud of our schedule because we try to pick up the best teams we can outside our conference. We want to be tested every week so we can see where we stand. There were some games last year, due to injuries and performances, that we'd like to have back, but that's why you play them. We're excited. Even going down to 1A, we can play games that give us a test, show where we're at, and give our kids a challenging game. We're excited about going to 1A and going to the Hogoheegee or the Cumberland—those are both top-to-bottom really good football programs. In this

area, football doesn't matter which district you're in. They're all good players and coaches, so wherever we're at and whoever we play, we're just excited for the opportunity. It doesn't matter to us.

Q: Finally, what are your expectations for the season?

A: What we always talk about first with our team, take it week by week and one game at a time. We want to have a winning season. We have goals and aspirations of trying to get to the big game and making a deep playoff run, but to get there we have to take one game at a time, one opponent at a time, play it week by week, and see where we end up. Make a run if we can, but our first goal is to take one game at a time, end the season on a winning note with a winning record, and see where we get from there and if we can make a run in the playoffs.

This is the first in a three-part series covering the three-county schools' preseason outlook for football. Next week, Castlewood coach Cody Smith.

ALEXIS IVEY

FROM PAGE 1B



ball program. I am thrilled to be a part of the future of Cavalier volleyball, and I'm eager to get to work supporting our student-athletes as we continue to build toward greater competitive success. I can't wait to get started!"

Ivey is a native of Raleigh, N.C., and competed at Le-noir-Rhyne University, where she earned a B.S. in Exercise Science and a B. A. in Sport Management. A in Sport Management. During her playing career as a middle blocker, she ranked in the top of the SAC in blocks per set.

Rainey continued, "Coach Ivey is a passionate leader, and we are eager for her to guide the next phase of Highland Cavalier volleyball."

UVA Wise partnered with Mammoth Sports Consulting to assist in the search for its new head volleyball coach. Mammoth Vice President Dr. Kurt Patberg led the search effort.

She becomes the twelfth head coach in the program's history, which began in 1969 and was later revived in 1992 after a hiatus.

The Cavaliers will open the 2026 volleyball season in the Redderson Invitational in Greenwood, South Carolina when they battle Lee University on August 28th.

STATZER REUNION

The Statzer Reunion will be Saturday, August 15th @ the Oak Grove Community Center. Lunch will be served around noon. Family & Friends....please join us.

Kinship Navigator Program Celebrates 8 Years of Assisting Kinship Children and Families in Need

COMPASSION • CONNECTION • COMMUNITY

SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA – The Kinship Navigator Program is proud to celebrate its 8th year of providing vital support to kinship caregivers, children, and families across Southwest Virginia. Since its inception, the program has been a lifeline for relatives and close family friends stepping up to care for children, often in the face of unexpected and difficult circumstances.

Serving the counties of Buchanan, Dickenson, Lee, Russell, Scott, Tazewell, and Wise, as well as the City of Norton, the Kinship Navigator Program has made a lasting impact by offering guidance, resources, and a listening ear to those who need it most.

A MISSION ROOTED IN FAMILY

Kinship caregivers—grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings, and other relatives—provide a safe, stable, and loving home for children when parents are unable to do so. These caregivers often face emotional, financial, and legal challenges. The Kinship Navigator Program is designed to walk alongside them, helping to ease their burden and empower them with the tools they need to thrive.

"Our kinship families are the unsung heroes of our communities," said a Kinship Navigator. "They open their hearts and homes without hesitation. We're honored to support them every step of the way."

MAKING A DIFFERENCE EVERY DAY

Over the past eight years, the program has:

- Provided one-on-one support and advocacy to hundreds of kinship families.
- Connected families with resources such as financial assistance, counseling, education, and legal aid.
- Hosted events, trainings, and support groups to build community and encourage caregivers.
- Helped ensure children remain in safe, familiar environments where they can grow and thrive.

According to the Annie E. Casey Foundation more than 2.7 million children in the United States are being raised by relatives or family friends. In Virginia, kinship families are a critical part of the child welfare system, helping to keep children out of foster care and in the care of people they know and trust.



MEET OUR KINSHIP NAVIGATORS

Tina Presley
Kinship Navigator Supervisor

Jordan Still
Kinship Navigator

Nancy Boyd
Kinship Navigator

Tina Browning
Kinship Navigator

A COMMUNITY OF SUPPORT

The Kinship Navigator Program is more than just a service—it's a community. Caregivers often say the program has been a source of encouragement, understanding, and stability during some of the most challenging times in their lives.

"I don't know what we would have done without you," one caregiver shared. "You helped us find hope when everything felt overwhelming."

LOOKING AHEAD

As the program enters its ninth year, the mission remains the same: to support kinship families, strengthen connections, and create brighter futures for children across Southwest Virginia.



SCAN THE QR CODE TO MAKE A REFERRAL!

Thank you to all the kinship caregivers who make a difference every day.



Together, we build stronger families and stronger communities.

Visit the Kinship Navigator Facebook page at **Kinship Navigator** to make a referral.

To make a referral to our program please call

276-926-7179

PROUDLY SERVING: Buchanan County • Dickenson County • City of Norton • Lee County • Russell County • Scott County • Tazewell County • Wise County

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