

The Lebanon News

Russell County's Family Newspaper Since 1880

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LEBANON, VIRGINIA | \$2

Indoor pool could be coming to Lebanon

By SHAWN STREET
shawn@virginiamediainc.com

The possibility of an indoor swimming pool coming to Lebanon was a topic of discussion during the Aug. 10 meeting of the Lebanon Town Council.

Earlier this year town officials presented a grant request to the Wellspring Foundation of Southwest Virginia to help fund the proposed project. The pool would have included a spa area and an open area.

According to Mayor Tony Dodi, Wellspring officials denied the request due to the proposed size of the pool.

SEE **INDOOR POOL** | 2A



The town pool has been a favorite summer destination for years. Town officials are discussing the possibility of an indoor facility as well.

Grand jury hands down indictments against 36 individuals

By SHAWN STREET
shawn@virginiamediainc.com

The Russell County Grand Jury was in session last week and handed down indictments against 36 individuals.

Among those indicted was Donald Ray Ballew, 46. Ballew was indicted on attempted first degree murder and aggravated malicious wounding.

According to court documents, Ballew is charged with attempted murder of William Gregory Hess. The alleged incident occurred on January 9, 2026.

Others indicted include:

Ronald Lynn Barnette: obtain money by false pretenses greater than \$1,000;

Kiera Nicole Carnette: possess with intent to sell, give or distribute schedule I/II drug, possess with intent to sell, give or distribute marijuana;

Emily Dawn Cross: distribute schedule I/II drug, distribute schedule V drug, conspire/distribute schedule I/II drug;

Eric Allen Davis: eluding police – endangerment; John Michael Dodson: sex offender on school property;

Lawrence James Ennis: assault and battery against family member;

Travis Gabriel Evans: possess schedule I/II drug;

Garrett Allen Fletcher: possess schedule I/II drug;

Charles Ethan Goff: 50 counts of child pornography;

Tamarah Gail Griffith: possess schedule I/II drug;

Ryan Eugene Grizzle: child abuse/neglect;

Ashley Christine Hale: distribute schedule I/II drug, distribute schedule V drug, conspire/distribute schedule I/II drug;

Norman Randall Hayes: possess schedule I/II drug;

Brittany Nicole Hughes: child abuse/neglect;

William C. Jesse: unauthorized use of motor vehicle;

Benjamin Steve Keatts: two counts of possession of schedule I/II drug;

Joseph Alan Kiser: destruction of property/monument greater than \$1,000, attempted armed burglary in the nighttime;

Clinard Gary Lambert: driving after revocation while reckless driving;

Tammy Annette Lambert: grand larceny, two counts of credit card larceny;

Thurman Kenneth Lawson: grand larceny;

Johnathan Abraham Mackey: suffocation;

Ashley McKinney: possess schedule I/II drug;

Adam Lane Mitchell: unauthorized use of motor vehicle, destruction of property/monument greater than \$1,000;

Travis Scott Patrick: possess with intent to sell, give or distribute schedule I/II drug, transport schedule I/II drug into the Commonwealth of Virginia, carry concealed weapon by convicted felon;

Kenneth Otto Purkey: sex offender registry violent offender, fail to register or provide false information;

Tina Nelson Reedy: perjury;

Ronald Allen Robins: possess schedule I/II drug;

Rebecca Sue Salyers: destruction of property/monument greater than \$1,000;

Mitchell Daniel Sigmon: possess schedule I/II drug;

Joshua Spears: possess schedule I/II drug;

Shawn Jason Steffey: strangulation, escape without violence;

Zechariah Luke Thomas: sell, give or distribute

SEE **GRAND JURY** | 2A



K9 Nova is the newest member of the Russell County Sheriff's Office.

Sheriff's office introduces K9 Nova

By SHAWN STREET
shawn@virginiamediainc.com

Russell County Sheriff Bill Watson recently introduced the department's newest officer – K9 Nova.

K9 Nova is a three-year-old German shepherd mix. She is a dedicated narcotics detection canine and was purchased from Sector K9 in Waxahachie, Texas. She is certified through the American Working Dog Association.

Nova's arrival at the Russell County Sheriff's Office is a heartwarming story of second chances.

Through no fault of her own, Nova was surrendered to a euthanizing shelter in Los Angeles

County, California. She waited patiently for a family to adopt her, but no one came to her rescue.

Just days away from being put down, a compassionate animal advocate recognized her exceptional potential. That person reached out to Sector K9 Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to transforming rescue dogs into working police K9s through its Rescue2Resource Program.

Nova was adopted and transferred to Texas where she began her training.

Sector K9's mission is simple yet powerful: save shelter dogs, train them for law enforcement service, and give both dogs and departments the resources they need to succeed. By bridging the gap

SEE **K9 NOVA** | 2A



Sheriff Bill Watson accepts a donation from Remote K9 Foundation.

Buchanan County murder trial moved to Lebanon

By SHAWN STREET
shawn@virginiamediainc.com

The high-profile trial of a prison guard from Buchanan County has been moved to Russell County.

Earlier this month, the defense team for Dustin Barrett Owens, 42, requested a change of venue for the trial.

That request was granted on August 5, and the trial will take place inside the Russell County Circuit Courtroom. The trial is scheduled to begin on August 24.

At the time of his arrest, Owens was working as a guard at Keen Mountain Correctional Center in Buchanan County.

In October 2022, his girlfriend, Amber Dawn Compton, 35, was reported missing. Compton also worked at Keen Mountain Correction Facility as a nurse.

Police discovered her body inside her Vansant residence. She had reportedly been shot multiple times.

Compton, a mother of three from a previous relationship, was seven months pregnant when she died.

After an investigation by the Buchanan County Sheriff's Office and the Virginia State Police, Owens was taken into custody at his Vansant residence.

His arrest came on October 22, the same day police discovered Compton's body.

According to records from the Buchanan County Circuit Court, Owens is charged with aggravated murder of a pregnant victim, killing a fetus with premeditation, and use of a firearm in the commission of a felony.

The trial is scheduled to take three weeks.



Tourism spending hits record \$36.2 billion in Virginia

Governor Abigail Spanberger announced that Virginia's tourism industry continues to reach historic milestones, with visitors spending a record-high \$36.2 billion in the Commonwealth. Visitor spending increased 3.1 percent, or \$1.1 billion, over the previous year, marking the fourth consecutive year of growth in visitor spending.

“Virginia tourism is powering our local economies — supporting jobs, strengthening small businesses, and investing in our communities. When Americans from across our country and visitors from across the globe come to Virginia, they immediately understand why our beautiful Commonwealth is a world-class destination,” said Governor Abigail Spanberger. “With this record-breaking year for tourism, Virginia households saved an average of more than \$1,000 in state and local taxes. We’re continuing to build on this momentum and showcase everything our Commonwealth has to offer.”

Virginia welcomed a record 46.6 million domestic and international overnight visitors, marking an increase of nearly one million visitors and the second consecutive year of record visitation. Visitors spent \$99 million per day in Virginia, up from \$96 million the previous year, with dining, recreation, and other experience-based spending fueling much of that growth as travelers continued to prioritize meaningful travel experiences.

“These record-breaking results demonstrate that tourism remains one of Virginia’s strongest economic drivers,” said Secretary of Commerce and Trade Carrie Chenery. “When visitors choose Virginia, they’re supporting entrepreneurs, artisans,

small businesses, and employers in every region of the Commonwealth. The impact of tourism extends far beyond hotels and attractions, with visitor spending supporting internationally-recognized assets in communities of all sizes — from Main Street merchants and retailers to restaurants, wineries, breweries, museums, and outdoor experiences. Together, these businesses help make tourism an essential contributor to Virginia’s diverse economy.”

Tourism directly generated more than \$2.6 billion in state and local tax revenue over the previous year. Including tourism’s full ripple effect across Virginia’s economy, visitors saved the average Virginia household \$1,020 in state and local taxes while helping fund schools, public safety, transportation, and other essential local services. ...over the previous year, and generated \$10.6 billion in wages and salaries for Virginians.

Leisure travel remained the primary driver of Virginia’s tourism growth, accounting for 90 percent of overnight visitation as travelers increasingly sought high-value destinations closer to home. That trend helped fuel strong performance in Virginia’s leisure-focused regional destinations. Central Virginia led the state in hotel demand growth followed by the Shenandoah Valley and the Virginia Mountains, with stand-out gains in Staunton/Harrisonburg, Richmond, Roanoke, and Charlottesville.

Virginia’s record-setting momentum has continued into 2026, with the Commonwealth’s hotel industry outpacing national growth through the first half of the year. Through June, Virginia’s hotel demand increased 3.1 percent, compared to 1.8

percent nationwide, while hotel revenue grew 6.4 percent, reflecting continued strength in both business and leisure travel.

This success also reflects Virginia’s long-term path for tourism growth through the Commonwealth’s Statewide Strategic Tourism Plan, which Governor Spanberger launched in April 2026. Developed in partnership with industry stakeholders across every region, the plan outlines a coordinated, data-driven strategy to strengthen Virginia’s visitor economy over the next decade.

“For the fourth year in a row, we’re celebrating another record, and that kind of sustained growth speaks to the strength and resilience of Virginia’s tourism industry,” said President and CEO of Virginia Tourism Corporation Rita McClenny. “From coast to cliff, visitors are discovering everything Virginia has to offer, and our tourism partners are delivering the experiences that keep them coming back. Around the clock and across the Commonwealth, our visitor economy never stops. With our hotel performance already outpacing the nation in 2026, we’re building on this momentum and looking forward to another strong year for Virginia tourism.”

Virginia Tourism Corporation receives its annual economic impact data from Tourism Economics. The information is based on domestic and international visitor spending (travelers from within the United States) from per-person trips. Visitors included those who stayed overnight or traveled more than 50 miles to the destination. Detailed economic impact data and methodology are available at vatc.org/research. Locality data will be available in September 2026.

Special education committee meeting

By SHAWN STREET
shawn@virginiamediainc.com

Russell County Public Schools’ Special Education Advisory Committee will meet on Wednesday, August 26 at 9 a.m. at the school board office.

All interested parents, guardians, educators, and community members are invited to attend the meeting in person or virtually.

Those electing to join the meeting virtually may do so at <https://meet.google.com/pgd-dcao-tuv?hs=224>.

The purpose of the meeting is to help interested parties stay informed about special education programs, resources, and local initiatives; share ideas and suggestions to support exceptional learners; and connect with school leadership, special education staff, and other families.

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K9 NOVA

FROM PAGE 1A

between rescues and police agencies, the Foundation provides an innovative, cost-effective alternative to traditional K9 sourcing—while showcasing the incredible potential of rescue dogs, including breeds often misunderstood or overlooked.

She was purchased by the Russell County Sheriff’s Office with assistance from a business owner in Texas.

“A 17-hour road trip was completed to meet, train, and transport Nova back to Virginia,” Watson said. “She is now employed with the Russell County Sheriff’s Office as our latest detection canine to combat narcotics within our county.”

Nova is partnered with Deputy Erik Hinchey.

The purchase was also made possible through a dona-

tion from Cross Junction, Virginia-based Remote K9 Foundation.

“We can’t say enough ‘thank you’s’ for the amazing donation towards our goal of purchasing a K9 dog to assist in combating narcotics and keeping our community safe,” Watson said. “Thank you for the amazing work and dedication you have to assist departments with the hope of purchasing a K9 dog.”

Remote K9 said in a statement, “Feeling incredibly honored to present a \$2,000 donation from RemoteK9 Foundation to the Russell County Sheriff’s Office! This generous contribution will help them acquire a new canine companion after the loss of their beloved team member. Grateful to be part of such a meaningful cause.”

GRAND JURY

FROM PAGE 1A

greater than/equal to 100 grams mix, transport greater than/equal to one ounce of schedule I/II drug into the Commonwealth of Virginia;

Jeremy Lee Vanover: sell/distribute stolen property, grand larceny, grand larceny/attempt, eight counts of break and enter;

Brian Ferrell Whited: distribute schedule I/II drug greater than 20g of mix;

Crystal Lee Witt: possess schedule I/II drug.

Indictment by a grand jury does not indicate the guilt of the defendant. It merely means that the grand jury saw enough evidence to send the case to trial. All the above-mentioned defendants are considered innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

INDOOR POOL

FROM PAGE 1A

“They turned that down,” Dodi said. “And the reason they turned it down was, it was two lanes. If they are going to invest in a major project, they want it to be five lanes.”

Dodi said he asked Town Manager Drew Short to see if the property recently purchased by the town near the Community Center could hold a pool of that size.

Short said it might be possible if the spa area and open area are done away with. He added that the biggest obstacle would be the grading work needed on the property.

Dodi asked council members to think about the proposal and it would be discussed again at a later date.

In 2021 the Virginia General Assembly passed a bill prohibiting food vendors from using Styrofoam packaging. The ban was designed to roll out in two phases.

Businesses with more than 20 locations had to be rid of Styrofoam by July 1, 2025, with all others being in compliance by July 1, 2026. The bill did, however, allow for one year local exemptions.

Bonanza, Pat’s Diner, Phat Patty’s, and Pizza Town applied for exemptions. The town council approved their requests.

During his town manager’s report, Short

announced that the wall project on the west end of town has been completed. Sod has also been installed.

The wall is part of an extensive plan to improve the scenery of the west entrance to the town.

Short also said that work has begun on the long-awaited Main Street Villas.

Main Street Villas, which will be located on the grounds of the former Carriage House Motel, is expected to provide 21 housing units for elderly residents.

A groundbreaking ceremony was held for the project in June 2023 and officials had hoped the project would have been completed by November 2024.

The first phase of the project will focus on utility line work such as the installation of water and sewer lines, sidewalk work and preparing pads for the construction of the homes.

Police Chief Eric Deskins gave a report on recent efforts of the Holston River Regional Drug Task Force, which includes members of the Lebanon Police Department. Deskins said, “Half a million dollars of drugs and narcotics were seized.”

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STAFF

MICHAEL SHOWELL
Publisher, Virginia Media, Inc

AILA BOYD
Executive Editor, Virginia Media, Inc

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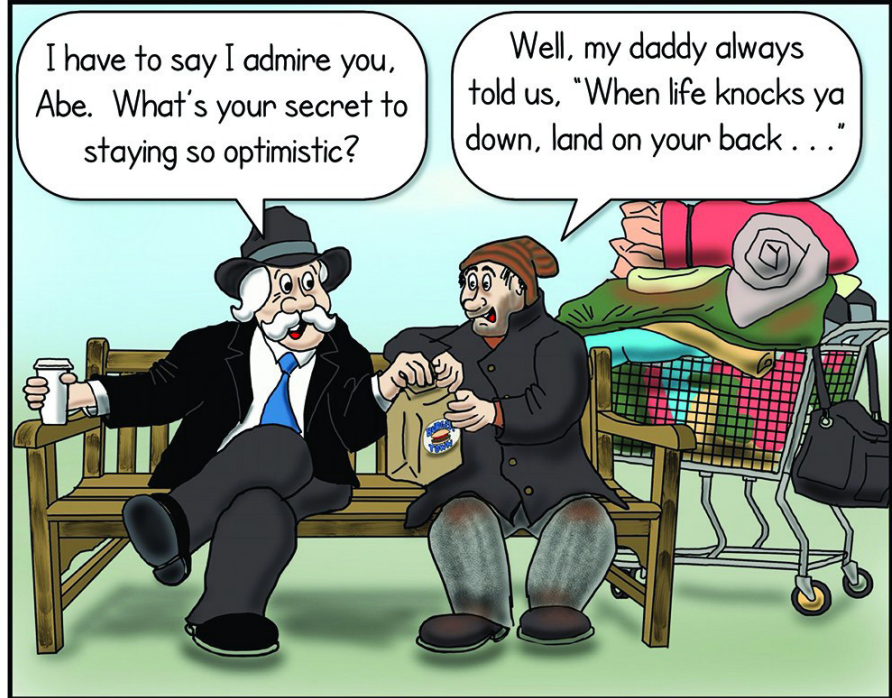
CONTACT

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

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By R.G. Holmes © 2026



When Life Gives You Tomatoes... Make Pie!



If you keep a garden, you know the feeling. Along about the first week of July, your tomato plants stop being polite about it. What started as a hopeful handful of green orbs back in May turns, almost overnight, into a full-blown invasion: vines heavy, counters covered, and neighbors suddenly harder to find because they know good and well what's in that grocery sack you're carrying up their porch steps.

Around these parts, the tomato sandwich handles most of that overflow, and rightly so. White bread, a smear of mayonnaise, a thick slice still warm from the sun, a little salt, and for me a metric ton of black pepper. There's nothing wrong with it. There's a reason it's survived a hundred summers.

But when the vines really get going, a sandwich can only eat so many tomatoes. So this year, before you find yourself leaving bags on porches and ringing doorbells like it's Halloween, I want to introduce you to the tomato sandwich's fancier, more filling cousin: the layered, cheesy, mayonnaise-bound classic that turns a garden glut into a genuine centerpiece.

It's not complicated. It just takes a little patience, mostly in the draining, which is the one step you cannot skip. Skip it, and you'll end up with soup in a crust instead of a pie. Do it right, and you'll have something worth fighting your sister over the last slice.

Here's how we build it.

- Tomato Pie**
Yield: 1 (9-inch) pie
- Time: 1 hour, plus 30 minutes draining and chilling and 3 hours cooling
- 2 (9-inch) Pie Dough Rounds
 - 2 lbs Ripe Beefsteak Tomatoes, cored and cut into ¼-inch slices
 - ½ t Salt
 - ¼ C Duke's Mayonnaise (you can use other mayo, but I think we know Duke's is the best, right?)
 - 4 t Cornstarch
 - 1½ C Sharp Cheddar Cheese, grated
 - 4 ea Scallions, sliced thin



DRAIN TOMATOES: Arrange the tomato slices on a paper towel-lined baking sheet and sprinkle with the salt. Let them drain for 30 minutes, then press with more paper towels until they're as dry as you can get them. Don't rush this part — it's the difference between a pie and a puddle.

ROLL DOUGH: While the tomatoes drain, roll one dough round out on a lightly floured surface into a 12-inch circle (skip this step if you're using a store-bought crust). Transfer it to a 9-inch pie plate, letting the excess hang over the edge, cover with plastic, and refrigerate for 30 minutes. Roll the second round into a 12-inch circle and refrigerate it as well.

ASSEMBLE PIE: Adjust your oven rack to the lowest position and heat the oven to 450 degrees. In a bowl, mix the mayonnaise, cornstarch, and ¼ cup of the cheese until well combined. Sprinkle the remaining cheese over the bottom of the dough-lined pie plate. Layer a third of the tomatoes over the cheese, spread half the mayonnaise mixture over top, and sprinkle with half the scallions. Repeat with another third of the tomatoes, the remaining mayonnaise mixture, and the remaining scallions, then finish with the last of the tomatoes on top.

CRIMP CRUST: Lay the top crust over the pie, press the two crusts together, then trim, fold, and crimp the edges. Cut four small vent holes in the top crust. Place the pie on a rimmed baking sheet and bake for 10 minutes, then lower the oven to 325 degrees and continue baking until the crust is golden brown, about 55 minutes more. Cool on a wire rack at least 3 hours. Serve at room temperature.

Enjoy, friends! And if the tomatoes are still winning out there in your garden, you know who to call. Oh, and if you want to see a video of how to make it, check out the first season of my Recipes & Roadmaps series on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1zGknBN-zouM>



Virginia Department of Veterans Services hosting Veterans Benefits and Resource Fair in Lebanon

The Virginia Department of Veterans Services is hosting a Veterans Benefits and Resource Fair, Thursday, Sept. 10, 2026, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Russell County Conference Center in Lebanon. All veterans, active-duty service members, Guard and Reserve, and their families are invited and encouraged to attend.

DVS team members will be on hand to meet one-on-one with participants to help them learn about and apply for the many federal and state benefits they earned from their military service.

Topics to be covered include U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Disability Claims, Healthcare Enrollment, Education and Housing Benefits, Survivor and Dependent Benefits, Employment Assistance, Coordinated Veteran and Family Support Programs and more.

The mission of the Virginia Department of Veterans Services is to serve those who served. This is an opportunity for veterans of any era, active-duty service members, Guard and Reserve, and their family members to ensure they are taking advantage of the resources and benefits currently available and get face-to-face assistance to apply for them.

"No veteran should have to struggle through a complicated benefits system on their own. Every application represents a lifetime of service, and every veteran deserves someone who will take the time to listen, explain the process, and advocate on their behalf," said DVS Commissioner John Maxwell. affords veterans access to individualized support and helps remove barriers that too often prevent veterans from accessing the benefits they've earned," said DVS Commissioner John Maxwell.

There is no charge to attend this DVS Benefits Resource Fair and all services provided are also free. Pre-registration is encouraged but not required as walk-ins are welcome. For more information, please visit www.dvs.virginia.gov.

The Virginia Department of Veterans Services is a state government agency with more than 50 operating locations across the Commonwealth of Virginia. DVS traces its history to 1928 and the establishment of the Virginia War Service Bureau to assist Virginia's World War I veterans.

DVS assists veterans and their families in filing claims for federal veterans benefits and provides veterans and family members with linkages to services including behavioral healthcare, housing, employment, education and other programs. The agency operates four long-term care facilities offering in-patient skilled nursing care, memory care, and short-term rehabilitation for veterans.

It also provides an honored final resting place for veterans and their families at three state veterans cemeteries.

It also operates the Virginia War Memorial, the Commonwealth's tribute to Virginia's men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice from World War II to the present. For more information, please visit www.dvs.virginia.gov.

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Congressman Griffith: Organ Scandal

The 118th Congress served as a launching pad for numerous actions taken in the 119th Congress.

House Republicans reintroduced commonsense policies that first secured House passage in the 118th Congress.

One bill, the Laken Riley Act, which I repeatedly voted for, makes it easier for law enforcement to arrest criminal illegal aliens for certain crimes. This bill received swift consideration and passage in both the House and Senate.

A second bill is the HALT Fentanyl Act. I was the proud House sponsor of this legislation to permanently designate lethal fentanyl-related substances as Schedule I drugs. The bill also made researching Schedule I drugs easier so that we can work to better understand the impacts of these substances on human health.

Like the Laken Riley Act, this bill received swift consideration in both chambers of Congress.

Both of these bills not only won support in the 119th Congress, but from the President as well. President Trump signed these bills into law to help protect American communities.

Some of my actions in the 118th Congress have influenced further action at the federal level.

During that time, I served as the Chairman of the Oversight & Investigations Subcommittee for the House Committee on Energy and Commerce.

Moreover, I was a leading Energy and Commerce member on the Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic.

During my leadership on these panels, I routinely participated in oversight of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), with particular interest in American public health agencies engaged in risky research and gain-of-function research projects.

Our investigative work demanded answers from public health officials like Dr. Anthony Fauci.

My findings led me to introduce the Risky Research Review Act. This bill outlines key reforms to make American-funded research safer, more transparent and more accountable.

To continue momentum on this front, I reintroduced the bill in the 119th Congress with Senator Rand Paul. But the Trump Administration is actively responding to my



MORGAN GRIFFITH

WEEKLY REPORT FROM THE CAPITOL

concerns.

In July 2026, the Trump Administration announced a new government policy for stopping high-risk life sciences research.

The federal policy prohibits American funding of dangerous gain-of-function research in both domestic and foreign settings and aims to establish stronger oversight for life sciences research that could present significant risks to human health.

The Trump Administration further limited federal support for research in countries or institutions that lack appropriate biosafety, biosecurity and oversight standards.

While I will still push for my legislation to enshrine necessary guardrails into law for federally funded risky research, these federal actions are steps in the right direction.

A separate health care policy I investigated under my Chairmanship in the 118th Congress concerned the implementation and oversight of the organ donation and transplant system.

I led a hearing to spotlight issues with our organ transplant programs and discuss the failures of the groups responsible for the procurement of organs, Organ Procurement Organizations (OPOs).

In particular, I highlighted alarming allegations that were previously raised to my Subcommittee's attention.

We received reports that an OPO had planned to operate on prospective organ donors who showed signs of life!

Another allegation claimed that somebody mouthed the words "help me" just before doctors were ready to commence an organ harvesting procedure.

The patient survived, but this disturbing detail reinforced Congressional desires to make the organ transplant process safer and less risky.

These reports reflected concerns about Network for Hope, one federally designated OPO, and its management and operating procedures.

Upon hearing these troubling allegations, my Oversight Subcommittee brought in medical experts to understand the organ transplant health care landscape and determine the frequency at which these incidents happen.

Following my investigation on the issue, the Trump Administration has worked to protect prospective organ donors and patients awaiting lifesaving treatments.

In August 2026, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services took steps to decertify Network for Hope! This means the OPO can no longer do business with the federal government, and it loses a primary source of income.

This action is another critical federal step in working to ensure the safety and integrity of organ donation and securing U.S. health care programs to better protect patients.

I am proud to have been an early advocate on these issues to help sway federal action. I will continue to shine a light on issues that deserve attention from Congress, the President and the American people.

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/>. Also on my website is the latest material from my office, including information on votes recently taken on the floor of the House of Representatives.

I did it!: I retired!

I had no plans other than to work for another year. Seventy sounded like a good age to exit stage left, but a conversation with my youngest son during the wee hours of the morning right before his wedding this past June changed my mind. Well, that and an email from Russell County that mentioned a necessary reduction in force was in place for the coming year. I thought I'd go and leave someone who needed the job with a job.

The conversation with my son spoke of the good I had done, the lives I had touched, the difference I had made, and what this next turning of a page would mean for me. The county had offered an incentive to retire, and one morning I was sitting at my computer, and I heard that small voice say, "It's time to go, Deb. Time to go."

That was all it took. I listen well.

Now, lest you think it was an easy decision for me, it was not. So much of my identity is wrapped up in Russell County Schools. I began in the kitchen at Lebanon Middle, progressed to bookkeeper, was hired as a full-time secretary at Lebanon Elementary and Lebanon Primary School.

I liked what I saw teachers doing so well; I went back to college to teach. It was my dream job. Teaching consumed me.

I have worked all of my life. I began at the tender age of fifteen. Never mind that I had to dress in a sailor dress to serve fish to customers at Fass Brothers' Fish House. The white lace-up shoes were a fashion disaster for a girl who wanted to be cool. Then on to A&W Root Beer where the mugs were frosty, and the owners became



DEBBIE GIBSON

friends. Then cosmetic sales, fifteen years of banking, full-time caregiving to my in-laws, and then Russell County snagged me to become theirs. I have happily resided in that capacity for twenty-three years.

These last few weeks have had me thinking seriously about what's next. My mother told me that it will take a while to settle into the new me, but she assured me that there will be things I want to do for others as well as for myself. I'm still able-bodied and keen-minded. I still love people, but I no longer require a room full of them. Now is the time to do the things I've put off doing.

What are those things? Well, let's see. I want to write. I have a book or two or three inside of me. I want to spend time with my family, which will mean travel. Nobody is here in Castlewood. I want to plant flowers, to keep the fire going, rest well, put out a tiny garden, embroider, take long walks, nap when I feel like it, stay up late if I choose, and maybe even take on quilting. It occurs to me that most of those things are solitary enterprises.

I had told Dr. Hooker the day I signed up to receive my retirement from the state that I have given this county my heart and soul. She said

she knew that. Now my heart and soul will find another place to light. That is no small thing.

As I was writing this column, I received a message from a former student. It said, "Hey, Ms. Debbie, I don't know if you remember me, but I had you in school, and just wanted to tell you that you were by far my favorite teacher. You had a huge positive impact on my life. I did go down some wrong roads at one point, but trying my best to do good now. I think about you all the time. Thank you for everything you did for me and everything you've done for others. You are a blessing! Thank you for showing me that all things are possible with dedication and effort."

To say my heart clutched would be an understatement, and it made me think of a quote by John Wesley: "Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can."

I'd say that is pretty good advice whether you are gainfully employed or happily retired. So, I'm turning the page to a new chapter in my life. I shall be looking for ways to do good.

I thought you might like to know.

Adult education connection



BEVERLY PRATER ASHBY

Learning as an adult can be rewarding, but it can also be challenging when work, family, and other responsibilities compete for attention. Developing healthy habits can make it easier to stay focused, remember information, and succeed in an educational program.

Getting enough sleep is one of the most important habits for learning. A well-rested mind is better able to concentrate, process new information, and remember what has been studied. Establishing a consistent sleep schedule can help adult learners feel more alert and prepared for class or studying.

Eating nutritious foods and staying hydrated can also support learning. Balanced meals provide the energy needed to stay focused, while drinking enough water can help prevent fatigue and difficulty concentrating. Planning healthy snacks and meals can be especially helpful for adults with busy schedules.

Regular physical activity benefits both the body and the brain. Even a short walk, stretching, or other simple exercise can help reduce stress and improve energy. Taking brief movement breaks while studying can also help learners return to their work with greater focus.

Managing stress is another important part of successful learning. Adults may feel overwhelmed by school, work, and family responsibilities. Practicing relaxation techniques, taking short breaks, organizing tasks, and setting realistic goals can help reduce stress and make learning more manageable.

Finally, creating a consistent study routine can make healthy learning habits easier to maintain. Setting aside specific times for studying, limiting distractions, and keeping a comfortable learning environment can improve concentration and productivity.

Healthy habits do more than improve physical well-being; they can also support academic success. By getting enough rest, eating well, staying active, managing stress, and creating good study routines, adult learners can give themselves a stronger foundation for reaching their educational goals. If you need further help reaching your educational goals, please contact Southwest Regional Adult Education at 276-889-5424.

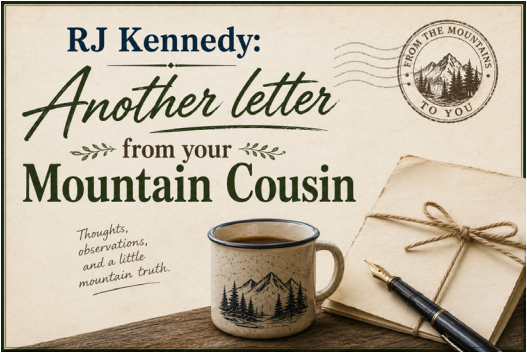
Dear Cousin,

Well August 11th has passed, the dog days of summer are supposed to be over, but here it is the thirteenth as I write this letter and it's still raining. The grass in the yard is so heavy, once you mow it, you have to rake it up and then mow again in three or four days! But I shouldn't complain, spring was dry and we were afraid we would run out of water if didn't rain soon. After we mow, the chickens love to scatter over the yard and find bugs we have hit. The baby chicks, now teenage chickens, are copying the old hens running about like crazy grabbing bugs. They seem to prefer bugs to chicken feed.

I saw a funny sight the other day cuz. We hauled the riding mower up to the top of the farm and mowed around the big campfire ring and the camp ground at the old Smith cabin. This years' baby calves had never seen the mower and as soon as I got the big circle mowed the calves thought I had made them a new playground and took off running, jumping, bucking, and butting each other. It was hilarious. Nearly fourteen calves running every which way at once and kicking up their heels. The old cabin looked real pretty all trimmed up and weed free.

And speaking of rain, boy has West Virginia caught it lately. I don't know how many little towns got flooded, but apparently a bunch!

It's a bit unusually for folks back here to see a tornado, but there were some funnels aloft and some bad wall clouds passing over the other day. We went and checked on the family cemetery after my cousin sent out some video from the holler showing some bad winds and



swaying trees. There were quite a few limbs down and we saw that another big tree came down off the mountain by Gravel Lick again.

And we were busy one hot day this past week taking down a dead Japanese cherry over in Lebanon Manor. It was around forty years old and made some really good firewood for winter. The small limbs I cut for my cook stove as better half sawed up the big stuff for the furnace. We had some good help loading the wood as better half and I sawed up the tree. Thanks fellows!

And cuz, there is a rumor of a MOUNTAIN LION roaming our neighborhood. Apparently, one of our neighbors, who will remain nameless, had one walking about on his roof down near the Clinch. I sure hope it doesn't decide to come up the creek and bother our sheep and goats. And I heard a pack of wild dogs killed some of Claude Hart's cattle up in Back Valley. I have to

wonder if they're the same ones who tried to kill our gold cow up on the mountain. I like my animals cuz, and I don't plan on asking anyone's permission to "put away" something attacking our livestock. Farmers feed the world, mountain lions and wild dogs don't. They might keep down the deer, but I like the deer, so there! If you don't want to hit a deer, slow down and stay on your side of the road. Least that way you won't hit other people either.

And better half keeps ditching and re-ditching the farm road after the storms. I keep finding all kinds of "flood fossils" down in the big ditch that carries the majority of the water off the hill. It can go from totally dry to a raging torrent in no time at all. At least with all the water, the sheep doesn't have to worry about it's on little private spring it drinks from.

After all this hot weather cuz, I'm looking forward to winter, even though this last one was a bit rough. We have a lot of trees dropped and drying ready to cut up for firewood, just waiting for some cool dry fall days to cut them up.

Our garden is still producing some tomatoes and cucumbers. The raccoons got the corn again. The potatoes did well. I'm about ready to turn the goats into it as the weeds took over during the wet weather again! However, we had a lot of good squash and beans and the sunflowers are mainly standing tall to feed the birds this winter, what ones the wind didn't blow down.

Until next week, try not to get washed away cuz, the flood watches continue.

RJ Kennedy

Do You Still Hear The Trumpets?

A retired friend of mine fishes three or four times a week. He does it because he enjoys it and it is something to do. A retired school teacher friend played organized basketball until he was 85. He played in college and enjoyed the game his entire life.

High school kids play sports, cheerlead, play in the band or pursue various activities because it is something they want to do. There are some pursuits in life that we feel we must do.

Often people work jobs they don't enjoy but they need a paycheck. Sometimes you may not really have the time to mow the grass but if you don't the grass will become unmanageable.

Food is an area where we have difficulties. I prefer ice cream and cake but I know I can't eat that very often. My regular diet of choice has to be salad, broccoli, salmon and other vegetables and some fruit. I understand why bison, elk and deer are healthier to eat. They have a very lean diet. Elk sausage and bison burgers are very good.

Every year, my doctor asks me if I am still interested

in doing stuff. I am. If I had zero interest in doing anything I don't know how I would survive. This may be the catch. We don't survive very long if we give up or have nothing that arouses our interest.

We need a reason to get out of bed in the morning. We need something to look forward to. Another friend wrote a book about hearing the trumpets in the morning. He wrote about his zeal to get out of bed and pursue life each day. When we stop hearing the trumpets in the morning is when we need to do a self-check. We need to ask ourselves why and determine to do something about our apathy.

I can't give you a list of activities or life pursuits. Only you know what flips your switch. Obviously it has to be something we can do because trying to do what we cannot do is not very fulfilling, but maybe it would be? Maybe learning something new might invigorate you?

Maybe doing the same old thing all the time is what has become boring to you? We are creatures of habit and



DR. GLENN
MOLLETTE

often we do the same things the same way forever. Maybe learning a new game or activity might be stimulating?

I do know doing the same thing the same way all the time will generally bring the same results. This may work for you. This may not be working for you.

Stay motivated. Do good every day. Love God and love yourself. Keep trying to be active. Go to bed tired. Hopefully early every morning you will hear the trumpets.

Wellspring Foundation of Southwest Virginia awards over \$16 million in grants

By SHAWN STREET
shawns@virginiamediainc.com

The Wellspring Foundation of Southwest Virginia has announced the awarding of more than \$16 million through its HOPE and IMPACT grant cycles.

With this round of funding, the Foundation's total commitment now exceeds \$70 million, reflecting a powerful and growing investment in a stronger, healthier and more resilient Southwest Virginia.

The Wellspring Foundation's grantmaking reflects its ongoing commitment to investing in programs and projects that address systemic issues across its service area of Washington, Grayson, Russell and Smyth counties. The projects funded this year are designed to strengthen community health, expand access to opportunity and support sustainable growth throughout Southwest Virginia.

Grants for organizations in or impacting Russell County include:

- Clinch Valley Soil and Water District \$1,315,743 for the Lebanon Hillside Trail Project
- Feeding Southwest Virginia \$403,080 for Healthy Food Access Project
- People Incorporated \$407,370 for Drive to Thrive Program
- People Incorporated \$29,250 for Vehicle for CHIP home visiting services
- United Way of Southwest Virginia \$300,000 for Youth Leadership and Civic Engagement Initiative
- Russell County Schools \$50,000 for RCCTC HVAC and Refrigeration
- Ballad Health Foundation \$405,000 for Russell County Hospital 3D Mammography
- Cleveland Community Center \$49,500 for Family Fitness Project
- Isaiah 117 House \$30,000
- Town of Lebanon \$50,000 for Pickleball Complex

"As the Wellspring Foundation wraps up its fifth year of grant-making, we are filled with gratitude and optimism as we see the meaningful work local nonprofit organizations are doing to serve our communities and strengthen Southwest Virginia," said Dr. JoAnn Price, chair of the Wellspring Foundation Board of Directors. "It is exciting to see organizations working more closely together, building partnerships and aligning their efforts in ways that are helping propel the region forward. On behalf of the board, I offer our heartfelt congratulations to each of this year's recipients, and we look forward with great confidence to the lasting impact their work will have across our region."

The 2026 HOPE and IMPACT grants supported a broad range of initiatives focused across all areas of interest to the Foundation, including public health, child and family wellbeing, workforce training, educational access and community economic development. From helping families access quality healthcare to preparing individuals for careers in high-demand local industries, each funded project plays a role in shaping a stronger future for Southwest Virginia.

"The Wellspring Foundation remains focused on supporting long-term, transformational projects that have the potential to create lasting improvements in the health and wellbeing of our communities," said Sean McMurray, executive director of the Wellspring Foundation. "While meaningful change takes time, we are already impressed by the early progress of several projects and encouraged by the dedication, creativity and collaboration demonstrated by our grantees. These encouraging developments strengthen our confidence in the work ahead and reaffirm the Foundation's commitment to helping build a healthy, thriving region for generations to come."

A complete list of the 2026 HOPE and IMPACT grant recipients is available on the Foundation's website at www.wellspringva.org. Organizations interested in applying for funding in 2027 should begin preparing now. Applicants are strongly encouraged to review the updated guidelines and eligibility requirements posted on the Foundation's website.

Both HOPE and IMPACT grants are open to nonprofit organizations and government entities serving Washington, Grayson, Russell and Smyth counties in Virginia, with funding priorities aligned with the Foundation's core focus areas: health, children and families, workforce development, education and economic development.

Applicants should note that all proposals must be submitted through the Foundation's online grants management system. Interested organizations can find detailed instructions and resources along with contact information for technical assistance at www.wellspringva.org.

The HOPE Grant application cycle will open again October 1, 2026, and close October 31, 2026, at 4:30 p.m.

The IMPACT Grant application cycle will open February 1, 2027, and close on March 12, 2027, at 4:30 p.m.

As Va. officials weigh data center pushback, report details industry's public service funding



Virginia localities mull data center pauses as industry-backed report shows how local tax revenue could aid in housing needs.

BY CHARLOTTE RENE WOODS
and SHANNON HECKT
Virginia Mercury

As a single mother balancing work against earning a nursing degree, Yvettrise Hoskie thought homeownership was out of her reach. Now, she's settling into a Henrico County townhome development.

The county's Affordable Housing Trust Fund helped with her downpayment, but the financial assistance was made possible by one of the state's more controversial neighbors — data centers.

The fund was created in 2024 and helps first-time homebuyers making between 60% and 120% of the area's median income. The fund is fueled by data center tax revenue.

Eric Leabough, Henrico community revitalization director, explained that the median income range is meant to help some lower-income earners and middle-class families that have otherwise been priced out or struggle with down payments.

He added that the goal is to make 750 new homes available to residents in the first five years. He said that 472 have been approved since the fund launched and 85 deals have been completed so far, with families like Hoskie's living in them.

"A lot of these homes have to be built, so we are at the mercy of construction timelines," he said.

Henrico supervisor Tyrone Nelson, who championed the creation of the fund and tethering it to data center revenue, said it "will have impact for generations."

Hoskie said she can now build a stronger financial foundation for her family.

"For anyone trying to buy a home and struggling, just know that it's out there and Henrico is willing to help you," she said.

Nelson explained that his locality decided to focus specifically on supporting first-time homebuyers because the greater Richmond region's population has grown and addressing housing supply for both renters and buyers has broadly been a goal for regional elected officials.

Nelson said that he hopes Henrico's story can inspire other localities.

Henrico, with its 37 data centers, is one of several Virginia localities that have funneled revenue from the facilities towards public benefit, but their massive power demands and siting issues present persistent challenges for residents and local leaders.

Local tax dollars show benefits, but residents don't feel the balance

A new analysis by centrist-left think tank Chamber of Progress, which is funded by the tech industry, highlighted how Loudoun County — dubbed the data center capital of the world — has lowered its property tax rates over the past decade while boosting public service funding.

County officials have been able to reduce real estate tax rates every year for a decade due to data center tax revenue ballooning. It's projected to total \$1.3 billion in 2027.

In the beginning of the 2026 tax year, Loudoun cut the \$25 vehicle license fee for residents. Annually, data center tax revenue directs over \$100 million towards county schools and other programs.

The Chamber of Progress report also highlighted Prince William County, which is a similar size as Loudoun but has lower per-pupil school investment and a higher property tax rate.

While many of Loudoun's residents are affluent, Chamber of Progress economist Kaitlyn Harger said that the locality's use of data center revenue can be a blueprint for areas with fewer resources, too.

"Loudoun provides a really good example of how you can use data center tax revenue to lower burdens on households," she said. "I think that's a huge way that data centers can be better neighbors."

State officials take a closer look at how to regulate data centers

Residents' appetite for data center development has abated across the commonwealth, and even Loudoun may be ready to roll up the welcome mat for the industry.

The county Board of Supervisors will vote at their Sept. 15 meeting whether to implement a temporary pause on all new data center applications while the county's comprehensive plan zoning ordinances are being reviewed and updated.

"The community has basically been begging us to do something about the unchecked growth of data centers," County Supervisor Juli Briskman said in a July interview. "The communities have been asking us to fight back against these big corporations that have basically been able to run roughshod over the county."

Suffolk, Front Royal, and Chesapeake have also discussed policy shifts to limit the industry.

Virginia does not have a statewide standard for siting of data centers, which has left local communities to learn about the process as they go.

Residents statewide have amplified their opinions on noise, water use, power infrastructure, and other impacts that accompany data center development. This has led to a major increase of local engagement at public hearings for data center applications and zoning considerations.

A new Chamber of Progress data center policy guidebook advises leaders against adopting moratoriums. Harger noted that any data center siting or rejections are important for localities to consider individually.

The organization suggested data centers can be good neighbors if developments "bring, build or buy" their own power and ensure that water used to cool servers is recycled.

Local leaders should also work with data center developers to set clear agreements and enforcements for violations of the terms in writing prior to construction, the report advised.

Data centers building their own power may hinder Virginia's near-term clean energy goals.

Under the Virginia Clean Economy Act, the major utilities are required to retire their carbon emitting power generation facilities by 2045.

But data centers who build their own on-site power — otherwise known as behind-the-meter power, which recent proposals show is mainly gas generation — do not fall under those requirements.

"I do not want to see us move in a place where we think, as a commonwealth, we're on path towards meeting the VCEA goals but that's because there's all this generation that is sort of outside of the scope of what is counted," Gov. Abigail Spanberger said in a July interview about behind-the-meter gas proposals from data centers.

Instead, the governor said the state should focus on "Now how does Virginia become the place where (there are) the best in class generation efforts in newer technologies?"

Data centers tied up state budget negotiations for months and almost triggered the state's first government shutdown this summer.

The crux of the fight was whether the data center industry should be allowed to keep their state sales and use tax exemption, which saves the tech industry an estimated average of \$1.6 billion yearly.

Ultimately, the exemption was left in place with some new environmental and regulatory changes laid out in the budget text.

Lawmakers across the political spectrum have pledged to revisit these data center issues on a statewide scale when the General Assembly returns in January.

Hoskie, the Henrico homeowner, has registered her 14-year-old son for his new school. Her mortgage provides stability, she said, and costs less than her previous rent.

She doesn't have strong sentiments in favor of or against data centers, but Hoskie said that any locality that approves the facilities should ensure they bring public service investments or fund programs like the one in Henrico that made her a homeowner.



Black lung cases surging again in Southwest Va., Appalachia; miners blame blocked regulations

By CHARLOTTE RENE WOODS
Virginia Mercury

With new research showing that black lung disease among Appalachian coal miners has reached an almost 50-year high, advocates are demanding federal regulations be enforced. The data published in the American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine is also part of a peer-reviewed research letter from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH).

Congress previously passed regulations meant to limit miners' exposure to coal dust, which causes the incurable lung disease. Typical mitigation measures include spraying drilling machinery with water to suppress dust particles, use of personal protective equipment like respirators and inspections by the Mine Safety and Health Administration.

The last time black lung cases were at current rates was in the 1970s, according to the NIOSH letter. While black lung disease dipped in the late 1990s, cases in workers who have spent 25 years or more in mines have climbed since 2000. A third of miners who have spent 25 years or more underground now have the disease.

There has also been an increase in miners with less experience, which "indicates that the burden of the disease is affecting younger miners and not confined to the most experienced workers," researchers wrote.

"This tells you that companies aren't doing what they're supposed to be doing," said Vonda Robinson, vice president of the National Black Lung Association.

The Southwest Virginia resident is the wife of long-time coal miner John Robinson. Since his black lung diagnosis a little over a decade ago, he's helped her work for laws and regulations to improve safety and benefits.

This entails lots of conversations with federal lawmakers in multiple states and political activism. Last year, they joined a multi-state coalition of miners in Washington D.C., to protest a court order blocking a President Joe Biden-era safety rule.

Under Biden's presidency, the Mine Safety and Health Administration created stricter safety standards by lowering exposure limits for workers — a critical move, John Robinson said, as miners over

time have needed to drill deeper and deeper into rock to reach coal seams. "It took us two and a half years to get to the coal seam," he said. "We basically breathed rock for two and a half years."

That means exposure not to coal at first, but also to silica dust from cutting through the rocks in the area. Quenton King, government affairs specialist with Appalachian Voices, said the mining industry suspects silica dust plays a role in continued black lung cases.

The Biden-era rule was supposed to take effect in April 2025, but cuts to federal workers contributed to a delayed enforcement timeline before ultimately winding up in court. President Donald Trump's administration did not defend the rule in court and petitioned the court to block labor unions and the Black Lung Association from intervening in the case.

National Mining Association spokesman Conor Bernstein told The New York Times late last year that the organization is "absolutely supportive of the new lower levels" but did not respond to inquiry from the Virginia Mercury by the time of this publication.

While the litigated rule would require operators to reduce silica concentration through a variety of measures beyond personal protective equipment, the association suggests PPE should be sufficient.

King said that miners struggle to keep their respirators on at all times because of communication challenges in noisy mines as drilling machines are running. Still, he added, "If you aren't trying to have a dust-free environment, respirators will clog up multiple times in a shift."

Appalachian Voices views respirators as the back up to back up measures and sees the Biden rule as a more solid front-line defense.

Just before pulling back on the Biden-era rule, Trump's 2025 State of the Union address to Congress focused on his goal of ramping up coal production for energy.

"Trump can say 'drill baby drill,' but if we aren't taking care of our miners, there isn't going to be any drilling going on," Vonda Robinson said, referring to the speech.

The Trump administration recently completed a review of a new coal dust rule as replacement for the Biden administration's, POLITICO reported. The proposal has not yet been publicly unveiled.

Congress, in the meantime, has been exploring legislation to support coal workers and their families. U.S. Sens. Mark Warner and Tim Kaine, both Virginia Democrats, have carried the Black Lung Benefits Improvement Act and the Relief for Survivors of Miners Act. The former is meant to improve the process for miners to receive financial benefits, while the latter is meant to help surviving spouses.

King said that receiving the compensation has often been challenging for miners and their families, with the process often taking years and at times with litigation from coal companies.

Democratic lawmakers in Appalachian states have championed the legislation, but it has not yet passed congressional chambers. Vonda Robinson said that bipartisan support is needed and said that she has been in touch with her U.S. representative, Morgan Griffith, R-Salem.

Griffin didn't endorse or oppose the bills. He said in an email to the Virginia Mercury that he looks "forward to studying various proposals and determining the best course of Congressional action on this issue."

He pointed to federal funding that already supports a black lung clinic at a federally qualified health center in his district, and noted that the reports of a surge in cases "merit federal attention."

Meanwhile, the Robinsons' fight continues, the couple said, as they advocate for newer generations of miners.

Robinson's diagnosis in his late 40s is not an uncommon occurrence for miners who spend decades drilling through rocks and into coal seams. But the couple said encountering younger men developing the disease has been jarring.

The couple shared that they knew of a 28 year old miner who has spent about a decade in the industry and now suffers from black lung.

"It upsets me because they have small children and they're probably not going to see their children graduate high school or meet grandkids," she said.

Vonda Robinson said she's written to Vice President J.D. Vance, both due to his family's roots in Appalachia and his role presiding over the Senate, in hopes he will spur congressional movement. Future demonstrations in the nation's capitol are also on the horizon.

"We just need to make some more noise," she said.

Virginia State Police to conduct high intensity traffic enforcement

The Virginia State Police will conduct Operation H.I.T.E. (High Intensity Traffic Enforcement) on Aug. 21 and 22, 2026, throughout Southwest Virginia. This initiative is scheduled to coincide with national Labor Day impaired driving prevention efforts.

During this two-day operation, Virginia State Troopers will maintain a highly visible and proactive enforcement presence along interstates and primary highways across the region. Staffing levels will be increased to support focused traffic and criminal enforcement aimed at reducing crashes and enhancing overall highway safety.

"Our priority is protecting the motoring public. By increasing our visibility and enforcement efforts, we're asking drivers to do their part—slow down, buckle up, and stay alert," said Captain Patrick L. Kirtner. "As we head into the Labor Day travel period, we urge all motorists to make smart choices behind the wheel. A moment of prevention can prevent a lifetime of consequences."

The Virginia State Police encourage all motorists to drive responsibly, remain attentive, and obey posted speed limits to help ensure safe travel for everyone on Virginia's roadways.

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Honaker football coach Aaron Lowe Q&A

By ANTHONY STEVENS
astevens@hdmidiatl.com

This is the final in a three-part series of questions and answers with Russell County football coaches. Aaron Lowe starts his second season as head coach of the Tigers. Lebanon News sportswriter Anthony Stevens recently spoke with Coach Lowe about the upcoming season.

Q: You're coming off a 7-5 season with an extremely young team. You won a playoff game. Before looking at this season, what were your thoughts on last year?

A: I thought it was a good year for us. We faced a lot of adversity, especially early on. We lost our first three games, played a bunch of young guys, and it would have

been very easy to pack it in and not deal with the adversity. But it was a testament to those guys to fight through it, learn, and grow. We lost (standout) Avery Musick. We hadn't learned how to play without Avery. It was big for our guys, us being a young team anyway, just learning how to deal with adversity and fight through it. They overcame it and we finished out the season pretty strong.

Q: As you commented, you started 0-3 and finished 2-4 in your first six games last year. You again open with Lebanon, Ridgeview and Rye Cove. How do you avoid another tough start?

A: We've had a good camp. With the way we've grown and matured as a young group, this year we've got two of

SEE AARON LOWE | 3B



Aaron Lowe on the sideline for Tigers.



Will Jesse (4) picks up yardage outside for Lebanon.

ANTHONY STEVENS | Lebanon News

Pioneers earn split at Gridiron Brawl

By ANTHONY STEVENS
anthony@virginiamediainc.com

WISE, Va. (August 14, 2026) – The Pioneers opened up the annual Gridiron Brawl at Carl Smith Stadium at UVA-Wise on Friday. Eastside showed why they are the pick of many to win Region 1D.

The Spartans scored three touchdowns with the first units playing and held Lebanon to one score. The Spartans scored three touchdowns with the first units playing and held Lebanon to one score.

"I thought we played well," Eastside coach Mike Rhodes said. "We were a little slow to start. I think we were a little too amped to play. Once we settled in and started doing what we do, we played better."

The Pioneers moved the ball on their first possession for a score but struggled to do so after that.

"I thought we looked good the first drive and had some good plays to set up others," said Lebanon coach Hunter Norris. "We got the ball out in space where the guys could make plays. Eastside's going to hit you in the mouth. They did that to us, and I thought we responded at times. We didn't tackle very well on defense."

Eastside scored on their first three possessions.

They moved the ball through the air but relied heavily on their running game.

"We have to clean up a few things

offensively, but they're minor things," noted Rhodes. "We knew coming in there would be things we need to work on. But we'll work on those things and keep rolling. I was pleased with the execution, the discipline, and I thought

we played hard."

The Spartans were stout on the line and controlled the line of scrimmage. "They are very good up front," de-

SEE PIONEERS | 3B



Layne Jesse meet the Eastside defense in the Gridiron Brawl.

ANTHONY STEVENS | Lebanon News

Honaker & Blue Devils get action in the Gridiron Brawl

By ANTHONY STEVENS
anthony@virginiamediainc.com

WISE, Va., (August 15, 2026) – On Saturday, at the University of Virginia's College at Wise, Honaker and Castlewood saw their first football action of the year. The Tigers outmanned Thomas Walker in the opener.

"We did some good things," said Honaker coach Aaron Lowe. "There were some things we wanted to look at in the running game. I thought we did well in the passing game. The defense flew around and got hats on the ball. Overall, it wasn't a bad game."

The 'Air Raid' offense was kicking on all cylinders.

"Honaker has a really good football team," said Thomas Walker coach Tanner Hall. "We knew that coming in. I saw some good things from my team, but Honaker really puts you in a bind in the secondary. I got to see what we need to work on."

"Overall, it was good work against a good team. Honaker is well-coached."

Thomas Walker will have a benefit game at Wise County Central on Friday. In their season opener, they host Cumberland Gap (TN).

"We did some things okay, but there are definitely some things we need to work on," remarked Hall. "You play a quality team in the preseason, and you can gauge where you are. There were some positives, but a lot of things we need to work on."

Castlewood opened up against Tazewell. The Blue Devils struggled to handle the Bulldogs.

In the last game of the day, Russell County rivals squared off with Honaker coming out on top.



Malachi Gilbert (6) finds running room against the Pioneers.

SEE BLUE DEVILS | 3B



Governor seeks participants for new corrections council to help shape Va. prison reforms

After years of understaffing, allegations of racism and other challenges, Gov. Abigail Spanberger seeks input into solutions for the Virginia Department of Corrections.

By CHARLOTTE RENE WOODS
Virginia Mercury

Angel DeJesus spent much of his adolescence involved with Virginia’s Department of Juvenile Justice and a chunk of his adulthood in Virginia Department of Corrections facilities. He’s now a public speaker and youth mentor, after being pardoned by former Gov. Ralph Northam in January 2022.

When he learned that Gov. Abigail Spanberger is assembling a council on corrections, he applied to participate. Public service, DeJesus said, is important to him.

“I have a lot of lived experiences to be able to bring to the table,” he said.

The Governor’s Community Partnership Council On Corrections was announced in June, with applications open through Sep. 4.

The 18-person cohort will comprise formerly incarcerated people and their family members, corrections and probation officers, representatives from criminal justice reform organizations and faith-based organizations that work in prisons.

Reentry specialists as well as police chiefs, sheriffs or regional jails representatives may also be selected.

Spanberger said that her administration looks forward to hearing the council’s perspective on “additional steps we can take to improve safety and transparency within VADOC facilities.”

Shawn Weneta, a policy strategist and formerly incarcerated person, said bringing a variety of voices together is “the best way to make meaningful improvements.” He’d also like to join the council to offer insight from someone who has lived behind bars.

Persistent corrections challenges

In recent years, VADOC facilities have been plagued by under-staffing and frequent lockdowns, and have faced allegations of racism and retaliation that a state watchdog probe didn’t confirm nor

rule out.

By 2024 a handful of inmates at Red Onion State Prison, one of the more embattled facilities, burned themselves in protest of the conditions or to seek transfers.

While DeJesus spent his time in other facilities, he heard plenty of anecdotes from friends who’d been transferred out of places like Red Onion, Wallens Ridge or River North.

“I heard a lot of stories about those prisons and the racism there,” he said. “Most of the staff up there know each other, they live around each other, they’re family members, and they’re gonna stick together. It’s always 10 against one.”

When Sen. Mike Jones, D-Richmond, made a surprise visit in late 2024 to Red Onion, he said he saw so many of his constituents there, particularly Black Richmonders, he could have convened a town hall.

A 2023 report from the Prison Policy Initiative found that Black Virginians are incarcerated at a rate four times higher than white Virginians.

Alleged over-reliance on solitary confinement is another key concern about Virginia’s prisons.

State law formally refers to the practice of isolating inmates either for disciplinary reasons or for their safety as “restorative housing.” The law also outlines how long it can be utilized and mandates inmates receive some time out of confinement.

A class action lawsuit has been advancing through courts based on allegations of prolonged use of confinement and violation of the state’s policy that is meant to help people return to general populations within prison.

Recent reforms

While Spanberger’s administration gathers input on actions the state could take going forward, there have been recent efforts to improve aspects of VADOC for staff and residents.

Last week, the governor announced a reentry program at Red Onion. Designed for inmates whose

sentences are nearing their completion, participants live in the same housing area and focus on workforce readiness, re-entering society and are connected to community resources.

From January to May of this year, Spanberger said that use of restorative housing had dropped by 20%.

She added that use of force across all VADOC facilities had dropped by 39%, serious inmate-on-staff assaults had declined by 56% and lockdowns had decreased by 27%.

Confirmed overdoses dropped 47% while suspected overdoses dipped 12%. Addressing drugs within prison walls is something DeJesus is hopeful more work can be done about.

Weeks into her role as governor, Spanberger’s Executive Order 12 entailed enhanced training for correctional officers.

VADOC also currently has an addiction recovery program in place for inmates that test positive for fentanyl.

Inmates respond to changes, advocates look ahead

In an email thread shared with The Mercury and state lawmakers, a group of prison reform advocates recently expressed gratitude to VADOC director Joseph Walters for visiting a facility that has been rife with complaints.

But according to other emails, the group is still sharing with state official wellness check requests or allegations of medical neglect to inmates.

The Mercury asked if members of the group plan to apply for the forthcoming corrections council but did not receive a response by the time of this publication.

DeJesus said the new council is another venue for Virginians impacted by incarceration to relay concerns and propose solutions, this time more directly to the governor.

“Everybody on the board is gonna have a lot to say,” he said.

School system announces free meals, continued virtual health clinic

By SHAWN STREET
shawn@virginiamediainc.com

Russell County Public Schools has announced that all students will receive healthy school breakfasts and lunches at no cost this school year.

The free meals are made available through the Community Eligibility Provision.

All students will be automatically enrolled, thus no applications or income forms are required.

Should parents have questions about the program, they can contact the Russell County Public Schools’ Central Office at 276-889-6500 or visit www.russell.k12.va.us.

School officials also announced that the system will continue offering the School-Based Virtual Health Clinic through Niswonger Children’s Network and Ballad Health.

With parent or guardian permission and signed consent forms, school nurses can connect students with a Ballad Health Medical Associates urgent care provider through a live virtual visit - all without the student leaving the nurse’s office. Parents and guardians may participate in person or virtually.

Providers can evaluate concerns such as:

- Fever and cold or flu symptoms
- Sore throat or strep
- Ear pain and pink eye
- Allergy symptoms
- Nausea, diarrhea, or abdominal pain
- Rashes, wounds, or skin irritation
- Sprains, strains, and contusions

Insurance will be billed, or families may pay a flat fee of \$55 per visit. Additional fees apply for flu, COVID, and strep testing.

Parents are asked to complete the online consent form at: <https://schooltelemed.balladhealth.org>

HELP US TO HELP YOU AND YOUR CHILD

As a parent, you are naturally curious about your child’s growth and development. You may find yourself watching the child of a relative or neighbor to determine if your baby is talking when she “should” be or if your son is learning to read as well as other children his age can.

Children of all ages sometimes experience academic, behavioral, physical or health problems which make it difficult for them to learn age appropriate skills or have successful learning in a regular classroom. The Russell County Schools’ Special Services Department wants to help you determine if your child may be in need of special education services. Please take a moment to ask yourself the following question, “Do I have a child who”

- “has difficulty talking and pronouncing words properly?”
- “has trouble seeing people and objects?”
- “has difficulty hearing sounds or remains unusually quiet for long periods of time?”
- “moves about with difficulty when crawling, walking or running?”
- “learns slowly or has difficulty understanding directions and assignments?”
- “has trouble playing with other children or getting along with adults and peers?”
- “continues to show reversals in reading and writing beyond age 9?”
- “has other special health problems or medical needs?”

If you can answer “yes” to one or more of the above questions, your child may be in need of special help. Please call the Russell County Schools’ Special Services Department at 276-889-6500 and let our staff assist you with your questions

The Russell County School System is committed to providing a free, appropriate public education for all children between the ages of two through twenty-one who have been identified as eligible for special education and/or related services. Special programs are offered for students identified as:

- Autistic
- Developmentally Delayed
- Learning Disabled
- Intellectually Disabled
- Multiple Disabilities
- Emotionally Disabled
- Visually Impaired
- Hearing Impaired
- Speech/Language Impaired
- Orthopedically Impaired
- Other Health Impaired

Services can be provided for students needing speech and language therapy. Physical therapy and/or occupational therapy may be provided as a related service.

As a parent, you must be able to recognize a child’s needs in order for your child to develop his/her abilities. The earlier that learning, behavioral, physical problems or developmental delays are identified, the sooner a special education program can be developed to enable your child to learn skills to compensate for his/her disability. Again, we encourage you to contact us if you have any questions or concerns about your child.

PIONEERS

FROM PAGE 1B

clared Norris. “I think they are one of the best teams we’re going to see up front all year. It was a good test for us. I thought the offensive line played well. We didn’t have many blown assignments. On the defensive line, we have a lot to work on.”

For their first action of the season, it was a good learning experience for Lebanon.

“I thought things went well,” Norris stated. “The reason we wanted to play Eastside is they’re a team that’s fast and physical and would get after us and show us what we need to improve on. I was happy with my guys. I thought we did some good things. Obviously, we made some mistakes, but it’s nothing we don’t think we can fix.”

In their second contest against North Greene from Tennessee, the Pioneers dominated.

“I was excited to get our young kids in there. They got some good development and reps,” Norris noted. “Will (Jessee), being a freshman, has a learning curve, but he’s a dynamic athlete who took a busted play for a 40-yard touchdown on a scramble. That’s something he can bring to the table.”

The Pioneers will host Mountain 7 power Ridgeview on Thursday at Harry Stuart Field with kickoff scheduled for 7 p.m..

“Ridgeview is very well-coached. I have a lot of respect for Coach (Kent) Grant and how he does things,” commented Norris. “They are one of the best teams in the region, and it will give us a good test before we go to Honaker for the season opener.”



ANTHONY STEVENS | Lebanon News

Easton Taylor looks for running room against the Spartans.

AARON LOWE

FROM PAGE 1B

those three games at home, so that obviously helps a bunch. Our guys are up for the task and they’ve got to answer the call. They’re excited about it. We’ve got some depth. We’re still young, but these guys got a lot of experience from last year. Back in my day, you were lucky to play varsity when you were a junior, much less when you were a freshman or sophomore. I have a good group. They’ll answer the call and be ready.

Q: Your son, Parker, had a remarkable freshman season. He was an All-State performer at quarterback. What do you expect from him this fall?

A: He’s just got to stay humble and keep doing the things he’s doing. It’s important for him to be a leader on this team. He knows what needs to be done. We’ve got to go out and run our system, and he knows that. He’s got a lot of playmakers with him. He’s focused on what’s going on. He understands you can’t get too high and you can’t get too low.

Q: You’re still in southwest Virginia, so the ground game is important. Can the Tigers run the football and stop the run?

A: That’s our biggest thing. I’ve been telling our offense and defense line they’re the most important group on this team. They got in here this off-season, got stronger in the weight room. We’re young up front—possibly five sophomores on the offensive line and the same thing on the defensive line. The number one goal for us this off-season and going into camp is we’ve got to be better defensively. That’s the main priority. We had moments last year, but we also had moments where we didn’t get it done defensively and it cost us. These kids understand how important all three phases of the game are, and we’ve got to make sure we’re great defensively.

Q: That led to another question. You might be tired of hearing this, but allowing over 31 points per game, and over 41 in your five losses, is a problem. The last time your defense wasn’t leaky was back in 2023, when the Tigers won the regional title. To reach your goals, you need more stops. Do you think you can make that happen?

A: Yeah, absolutely. That’s the number one thing for us. Here at Honaker, traditionally for years they’ve always had stellar defenses. For us to reach our goals and get to where we’re want to be, we have to improve. Our defensive coordinator, Jeremy Miller, has done a good job of setting a standard and setting goals for us defensively that we’ve got to make sure we reach. If we can hold people under 14-21 points a game, we’ve got a great chance to win. That’s the goal—come out every Friday night and be a force defensively. We’ve been telling our guys defense mindset. We’ve focused a lot on it, doing the little things right technique-wise and so forth defensively. Time will tell.

Q: No matter the sport---defense is a lot of ‘Want To’. Do you think that’s true?

A: Yeah, 100%. These guys understand how important it



SAMMY BELCHER | For the Lebanon News

Jeremiah Rose (7) gains yardage in the playoff contest against Eastside last season.

is. We’ve focused a lot on it, doing the little things right technique-wise and so forth defensively. But as I said, time will tell.

Q: Pundits often say the step up from freshmen to sophomore is huge. How do you feel they are doing?

A: The good thing about this sophomore group is they work hard and they put time in. It’s an old cliché, but if you put the work in, you’ll get rewarded. I think that’s the key with this group. They’re here all summer. They put the time in the weight room. They’re good kids, and that’s extremely important when it comes down to it. They’re still young, but they’ve got a lot of time under their belt last year that most don’t.

Q: Everyone talks a lot about your sophomores, but you’ve got some good juniors and seniors too.

A: We really do. We’re pretty well balanced with the juniors and seniors we have. We’ve got playmakers. We’ve got a couple big guys. Levi Honaker came on last year and had a stellar year. Those guys have done a good job in camp helping set the standard and where we need to be, and understanding how we need to get better. That’ll be a big goal for us.

Q: Chilhowie knocked you from the throne in the Hogoheegee. What is the key to getting back on top?

A: I’ve been telling our guys for the last couple weeks the most important thing for us is we’ve got to take care of ourselves. We’ve got to fix ourselves and do the little things right. If we can fix ourselves and be ready to play each Friday night the way we need to, we’ll be right there where we need to be. At the end of the day, we’ve got to take care of ourselves. If we can fix ourselves, then I feel like good things will happen.

Q: Finally, many thought Eastside was the team to beat in Region 1D last year. They were good, but fell to Rye Cove in the finals. The War Eagles are the two-time defending Region 1D champions. There are always surprises. How do you feel about the region?

A: First of all, I feel like overall we’ve got a really, really good schedule. Everybody on our schedule is a good team and it’s very competitive. As far as the region goes, I think it’s one of the toughest in Class 1 in Virginia. It’s going to be who’s there when it comes playoff time, and how everybody can grow and be ready to go. I like our chances, but we’ve got to take it one game at a time to get to where we want to be. We know Eastside and Rye Cove are great programs and had great years. There are others. We know where we want to get, and we’ve just got to take care of ourselves and hopefully meet those guys in the playoffs.

BLUE DEVILS

FROM PAGE 1B

“We still have a lot of work to do,” first-year Castlewood coach Cody Smith said. “We had some first-game jitters. We have to step up and move the football. I thought the defense looked decent. Our work isn’t done; the hay isn’t in the barn.”

There were a few bright spots for Castlewood.

“Brunner Houchins had a good day on the line,” Smith said. “After I made a change on the offensive line, we were able to move the ball better. Brayden Stone ran the ball well, and Grayson Gomez had a good day at linebacker.

“We didn’t face a weak team today. Tazewell was tough; they didn’t give up much.

Honaker has a tough team; we were able to move the ball a little.”

The Blue Devils travel to East Montgomery for a benefit game on Friday. They host Bland County in the season opener the following week.

Honaker will also play on Friday when they host Lee High in a benefit contest.

“We have to continue to get better defensively; that’s the most important thing,” noted Lowe. “We want to keep doing what we’re doing offensively. I liked our effort. We got tired at the end, but I’m very pleased.”



Brayden Stone gets an opening in the middle for the Blue Devils.



Rylee Phillips (8) and Brayden Stone (0) close in on the Tazewell runner.

CLASSIFIEDS

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LEGAL NOTICE

SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEE'S NOTICE OF SALE OF 97 Middle Avenue, Cleveland, Virginia 24225

WHEREAS, by Deed of Trust dated September 10, 2019, of record in the Clerk's Office for the Circuit Court of Russell County, Virginia, by Book 858, Page 0409, Denver Lee Turner and Kayla Yvonne Turner, husband and wife, conveyed to Kristie Helms and Michael Page, Trustees, the herein-after described real estate to secure the payment of a note in the original principal amount of \$46,200.00; and WHEREAS, the undersigned was appointed and substituted as Substitute Trustee under this Deed of Trust by a substitution dated June 15, 2026, and recorded in Clerk's Office of the Russell Circuit Court of Russell County, Virginia, by Instrument No 260001187; and WHEREAS, default has been made in the payment of said indebtedness, and Eastman Credit Union, the holder of said indebtedness has declared the entire amount due and payable as provided in said Deed of Trust, and the Substitute Trustee has been directed to foreclose the Deed of Trust in accordance with the terms thereof; and WHEREAS, the public is hereby notified that the undersigned Substitute Trustee will sell the hereinafter described real estate at public auction, to the highest and best bidder, for ten percent down with the remainder due at closing within 20 days of sale, at the main entrance of the Russell County Courthouse, 83 East Main Street, Lebanon, VA 24266, at 10:00 a.m. on September 1, 2026.

Lying and being in the Castlewood Magisterial District of Russell County, Virginia, as follows, to-wit: PARCEL 1: BEING Lot No. 8, in Block C, of Wallace Manor No. 1, which is of record in the Circuit Court Clerk's Office of Russell County, Virginia, in Plat Book 2, at page 48, and which said lot is more fully described as follows: Beginning at a stack in the southeast corner of Lot No. 8 as shown by plat of Wal-

LEGAL NOTICES

lace Manor No. 1; thence S 55 55 W 110 feet to a stake; thence N 34 05 W 140 feet to a stake in the south side of Harold Street; thence following south side of Harold Street N 55 55 E 110 feet to a stake; thence S 34 05 E 140 feet to the beginning, containing all of Lot No. 8 in Block C. PARCEL 2: BEGINNING at a stake which is located at a point in the northern boundary of Harold Street, which said point is N 34-05 W 40 feet from the northwest corner of Lot No. 8 in Block C; thence N 34-05 W 150 feet to a locust post in the southeast corner of Reginald Stallard's lot; thence in the eastern direction 110 feet to a locust post; thence in a south direction 150 feet to a stake on the north side of Harold Street; thence in a west direction with the north side of Harold Street 110 feet to the BEGINNING. BEING the same two parcels of property conveyed to Denver Lee Turner and Kayla Yvonne Turner, Husband and Wife, by Warrant Deed dated September 10, 2019, from Reda Tolba, Executrix of the Estate of Willie Viola Hall, which appears of record in the Office of the Circuit Court Clerk for Russell County, at Lebanon, Virginia in Deed Book , at page . The following information is for description purposes only and shall not be construed as amending or altering the description set forth above in any way. Tax Map No. 116R-IB-832N/116R-ID-803K Property Address: 97 Middle Ave, Cleveland, VA 24225 The sale will be made without covenant or warranty regarding title, possession, easements, restrictive covenants, or encumbrances, in bar of all rights and equity of redemption waived in the deed of trust, and subject to all unpaid real estate taxes and all other rights or exemptions of the grantors in said deed of trust. This 30 th day of June, 2026.

Hanor Law Firm, PLLC, Substitute Trustee (423) 245-5000 PUBLISH: The Lebanon News Wednesday, August 19, 2026 Wednesday, August 26, 2026 SALE: Tuesday, September 1, 2026 at 10:00 a.m. FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Angela Hurst Loss Management Assistant Eastman Credit Union 201 South Wilcox Drive Kingsport, TN 37660 (423) 349-1368 LN-8-19;2026

TRUSTEE SALE OF 70 Greystone Drive, Castlewood, VA 24224 In execution of the Deed of Trust dated November 29, 2022, in the original principal amount of \$116,040.00, recorded as Inst. 220002576, in the Clerk's Office of the Circuit Court for the County of Russell, Virginia, default having occurred in the payment of the indebtedness thereby secured and at the request of the holder of the note, the undersigned, as Substitute Trustees, any of whom may act, will sell at public auction at the front entrance of the Circuit Court for the County of Russell on September 15, 2026, at 12:00 noon, the property located at the above address and described as beginning at a pin in the northwestern boundary of VA Highway Alt. 58, corner to the Sabo lot, thence with the northern boundary of said road S67 20W 100.00 feet to a pin, thence leaving said road N22 40W 147.58 feet to a stake in the southern boundary of a 15 foot wide alley, thence with the southern boundary of said alley N77 40E 101.64 feet to a pin in the northwestern corner of the said Sabo lot, thence with the line of said lot S22 40E 129.34 feet to the point of beginning, Tax Map No. 157L SA 2739, County of Russell. TERMS: CASH. PROPERTY SOLD AS IS WITH SPECIAL WARRANTY OF TITLE. A deposit of \$10,000.00 or 10% of the successful bid amount (whichever is lower) will be required immediately of the successful bidder, in cashier's check or certified funds made payable to the

purchase and endorsed over to "DOLANREID PLLC, TRUSTEE", no

LEGAL NOTICES

personal checks accepted. Balance is due within 15 days from date of sale VIA BANKWIRE ONLY. Sale is subject to post sale confirmation and audit of the status of the loan including, but not limited to, determination of whether the borrower filed for and obtained bankruptcy protection, entered into any repayment agreement, reinstated or paid off the loan prior to the sale. In any such event, or if trustee is unable to complete the sale, or if it is set aside or not fully completed for any reason except purchaser's default, the sale shall be null and void, and the purchaser's sole remedy, in law or equity, shall be the return of the deposit without interest. Upon purchaser's default, the depositor shall be forfeited and the property resold at the risk and costs of the defaulting purchaser. Sale is subject to all prior liens, easements, restrictions, covenants, reservations and conditions, if any, of record, as well as inchoate liens and any other matters which would be disclosed by an accurate survey or inspection of the premises. Real estate taxes will be adjusted to the date of sale. All costs of conveyance, deed, examination of title, recording charges, grantor's tax and possession will be at the expense of the purchaser. All risks of casualty immediately pass to the successful bidder. Time is of the essence. Winning bidder must sign a memorandum of sale immediately upon completion of sale. Additional terms may be announced at the time of sale. Trustee's affidavit and a copy of the notice of sale available at the foreclosure sale. The opening bid is not announced until the sale. Current sale status available at dolanreid.com/foreclosure-sales. THIS IS A COMMUNICATION FROM A DEBT COLLECTOR. ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE. For Information Contact: DolanReid PLLC, G. Benny Moore and P. Matthew Roberts, PLC, Substitute Trustee(s) 12610 Patrick Henry Dr., Ste. D, Newport News, VA 23602: (757) 320-0255, Ext. 220 or Ext. 260 Publish On: LN August 19 & 26, 2026

Notice of Public Sale Public Sale of 3 Storage buildings to be held on 8-21-2026 at 11 AM. Location: Campbell Storage Rental, 14608 US Hwy 19, Lebanon, VA 24266. Winning bid will have 3 days to clean out the unit after which monthly rents will be due. LN-08-19;2026

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS JANITORIAL SERVICES FOR CUMBERLAND PLATEAU COMPANY OFFICES The Cumberland Plateau Company is seeking qualified individuals or firms for the provision of janitorial and cleaning services for offices located at 224 Clydesway Drive, Lebanon, Virginia. To obtain a copy of the requested Scope of Services, contact the Cumberland Plateau Company between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. 276-889-1778. Submission Deadline: August 25, 2026 at 2:00 p.m. Proposals received after 2:00 p.m. on that date will be considered late and not acceptable. The Cumberland Plateau Company is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Anyone with questions or wishing to make an appointment to view the building may contact Kelly O'Quinn at 276-889-1778. LN-8-12,16;2026

TRUSTEE'S SALE 6002 Mew Rd Castlewood, VA 24224 In execution of the Deed of Trust dated March 20, 2023 and recorded on March 20, 2023 in Instrument # 230000393 of Russell County land records, Trustee Services of Virginia, LLC, the appointed Substitute Trustee, will offer for sale at public auction at the front of the Courthouse of the Circuit Court for Russell County, 53 East Main Street, Lebanon, Virginia on September 14, 2026at 11:00 AM the property more particularly described in the aforementioned Deed of Trust, located at the property address listed below and briefly identified as follows:

LEGAL NOTICES

All that certain lot or parcel of land, with all the appurtenances thereto belonging, being the northwest portion of Lot No. 24 in the subdivision of the John S. Miller Farm, which said portion fronts on Secondary Highway No. 66 a distance of 86 feet and runs back a depth or distance of 200 feet, as more fully shown on that certain map of the Subdivision of the John S. Miller Farm of record in Deed Book 179, page 290, of the Clerk's Office of the Circuit Court of Russell County, Virginia. And being that same property conveyed unto Paul Michael Dylan Mullins and Alexus Jade Mullins by Deed dated March 20, 2023 recorded in the Russell County Circuit Court Clerk's Office as Instrument Number 230000392. Tax No.: 156L E 3510 Property address: 6002 Mew Rd, Castlewood, VA 24224

The property will be sold "AS IS," WITHOUT REPRESENTATION OR WARRANTY OF ANY KIND AND SUBJECT TO conditions, covenants, restrictions, reservations, easements, rights of way, and all other matters of record taking priority over the Deed of Trust, if any. Pursuant to Code of Virginia § 55.1-321(A2), if the property is being sold subject to another priority security instrument(s), purchaser must certify that purchaser shall pay off any priority security instrument(s) no later than 90 days from the date the trustee's deed conveying the property being sold is recorded in the land records. TERMS OF SALE: A non-refundable bidder's deposit of \$15,000.00 or 10% of the sale price, whichever is less, by cashier's or certified check required at time of sale, except for the party secured by the Deed of Trust. Risk of loss is on the purchaser from date and time of auction. Balance of the purchase price must be paid by cashier's check within 14 days from sale date. Except for Virginia Grantor tax, all settlement costs and expenses are purchaser's responsibility. Taxes are pro-rated to the date of sale. Purchaser is responsible for obtaining possession of the property. If purchaser defaults, deposit may be forfeited and property resold at the risk and cost of the defaulting purchaser who shall be liable for any deficiency in the purchase price and all costs, expenses, and attorney's fees of both sales. If Trustee does not convey title for any reason, purchaser's sole remedy is return of deposit without interest. This sale is subject to post-sale audit of the status of the loan secured by the Deed of Trust including but not limited to determining whether prior to sale a forbearance, repayment, or other agreement was entered into, the loan was reinstated or paid off, or whether the property became subject to an automatic stay under the

U.S. Bankruptcy Code prior to the sale; in any such event this sale shall be null and void and purchaser's sole remedy shall be return of deposit without interest. Pursuant to the Federal Fair Debt Collections Practices Act, this law firm is a debt collector attempting to collect a debt and any information obtained will be used for that purpose. (26-01769) FOR INFORMATION CONTACT: BROCK & SCOTT, PLLC (Attorney for TRUSTEE SERVICES OF VIRGINIA, LLC) 484 Viking Drive, Suite 203 Virginia Beach, VA 23452 (757)213-2959 LN-9-12,19;2026

VIRGINIA: IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE COUNTY OF RUSSELL 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

LEGAL NOTICES

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 this action individually and/

LEGAL NOTICES

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

SERVICES

DIVORCE-Uncontested, \$525.00 + \$89.00 court cost. WILLS-\$295.00. No court appearance. Estimated completion time twenty-one days. Hilton Oliver, Attorney (Facebook). 757-490-0126. Se Habla Espanol. BBB Member. https://hiltonoliverattorney-va.com

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PUBLIC NOTICE

There will be a meeting of the Russell County School System's Special Education Advisory Committee on Wednesday, August 26, 2026 at 9:00 a.m. at the Russell County School Board Office and via Google Meet. The Google Meet link can be found on the Russell County School Board website.

All interested parents and citizens are cordially invited to attend.



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS NOTICE

The Town of Lebanon Request for Proposals for Sanitation Truck.

A Request for Proposal with specifications may be obtained at the Town Hall at 405 West Main Street, Lebanon, Virginia 24266. All proposals must be submitted by 12:00 Noon on September 14, 2026.

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



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.

ON THE ROAD WORD SEARCH

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

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

WORDS

AMBULANCE
BOTTLENECK
BOULEVARD
COMMUTER
CONGESTION
CONSTRUCTION
CROSSWALK
GRIDLOCK
HIGHWAY
INTERSECTION
MOTORCYCLE
OVERPASS
PEDESTRIAN
POLICE
ROUNDBABOUT
RUSH HOUR
SPEEDING
STOP SIGN
TAILGATING
TRAFFIC LIGHT
TURN
VEHICLES



ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20

Make the most of every opportunity that comes your way this week, Aries. You may not get many chances to test your mettle in the weeks to come, so it's important to act now.

TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21

Taurus, something that started out as a part-time venture could turn into much more. Figure out if this is the path you see yourself going and then make your move.

GEMINI – May 22/Jun 21

Let loose and have fun for a change, Gemini. Don't delay when others want to invite you out for a night on the town or even a brunch. Say "yes."

CANCER – Jun 22/Jul 22

There's a lot going on right now and it may have your head spinning, Cancer. Delegate some of your workload if you can. Don't be too hard on yourself.

LEO – Jul 23/Aug 23

Leo, it is important to remember that your on-line presence never goes away. Watch what you post and be mindful of what you support in social media groups.

VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22

Family matters require your undivided attention this week, Virgo. You must dig in deep to address them. There are two sides to every story.

LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23

Libra, just when you started to lose hope, the new horizon you were seeking comes into view. It is well-deserved.

SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22

Scorpio, if you find yourself with too much extra time on your hands, why not volunteer with the community to pass the time? This can be a great way to meet people.

SAGITTARIUS – Nov 23/Dec 21

When plans change on a dime, you are ready to roll with the new situation, Sagittarius. Higher-ups may get a peek at your quick thinking, which can land you a promotion.

CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20

It's time to make amends with someone who did you wrong, Capricorn. Life is too short to hold grudges, and this person has since mended their ways.

AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Feb 18

Unless you take swift action, you could be heading for a financial free-fall, Aquarius. Start to pull back spending for a while and see if the situation right itself.

PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20

Pisces, you are on fire lately. There's seemingly nothing you touch that isn't turning to gold. This trend will continue, but try not to let it go to your head..

FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

AUGUST 16

Madonna, Singer (68)

AUGUST 17

Austin Butler, Actor (35)

AUGUST 18

Christian Slater, Actor (57)

AUGUST 19

John Stamos, Actor (63)

AUGUST 20

Demi Lovato, Singer (34)

AUGUST 21

Usain Bolt, Athlete (40)

AUGUST 22

Richard Armitage, Actor (55)

SUDOKU

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

Level: Intermediate

WORD SCRAMBLE

Rearrange the letters to spell something pertaining to traffic.

P T S O

Answer: Stop

GUESS WHO ?

I am a singer born in England on August 22, 1995. I worked as a waitress while living in London. I started posting covers of songs on YouTube. I won Grammy Awards in 2019 for Best New Artist and Best Dance Record, and I've had many hits on the charts. I recently tied the knot.

Answer: Dua Lipa

CRYPTO FUN

Solve the code to discover words related to traffic. Each number corresponds to a letter. (Hint: 7 = O)

- A.** 16 21 8 22
Clue: Vehicles
- B.** 8 7 21 13 17 21 25
Clue: Place to drive
- C.** 11 26 8 18 26
Clue: Blend together
- D.** 16 7 12 18 26 22 6 4 7 12
Clue: Lots of vehicles

Answers: A: cars B: roadway C: merge D: congestion

PUZZLE SOLUTION

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

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

SUDOKU SOLUTION

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



Hemp businesses ask federal judge to block Virginia’s new THC cap

The lawsuit argues that eliminating the state’s 25-to-1 CBD exception will cause major financial losses without providing consumer safety.

By MARKUS SCHMIDT
Virginia Mercury

Seven Virginia hemp businesses are asking a federal judge to block new restrictions on consumable hemp products, arguing the changes will wipe out much of their inventory, trigger layoffs and force some companies to close when they take effect on Aug. 15.

The lawsuit, filed July 31 in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Virginia, challenges a new provision in the state budget that will eliminate an exception for products containing more than 2 milligrams of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) per package when they also contain at least 25 times as much cannabidiol (CBD).

Without that exception, consumable hemp products sold in Virginia generally may contain no more than 2 mg of total THC per package and must remain within the state’s 0.3% total THC concentration limit.

Barbara Biddle, is founder and CEO of District Hemp Botanicals in Manassas and one of the plaintiffs in the case.

“It will bankrupt my business,” Biddle said in an email. “I took out loans and signed multi-year leases under this regulatory structure and won’t be able to meet my financial obligations once this goes into effect. I’m effectively facing bankruptcy and will have to lay off my entire staff.”

The lawsuit argues the restriction amounts to an unconstitutional taking of private property and violates the due process and equal protection clauses of the U.S. Constitution. The businesses are seeking temporary and permanent injunctions, damages, attorney fees and a declaration that the restriction is unconstitutional.

Gov. Abigail Spanberger, Attorney General Jay Jones, state agriculture and cannabis regulators and the commonwealth’s attorneys in the localities where the businesses operate are named as defendants.

Businesses say transition leaves little time

Virginia businesses Nova Hemp & Agriculture, Redfern Hemp Co., Pure Elkton Manufacturing, Cypress Hemp II, Wellness Warriors and Simply Hemp are also part of the suit.

They argue Virginia encouraged investment under its existing regulatory system, but then changed the rules without providing a transition period, allowing businesses to sell existing inventory or offering compensation.

According to the lawsuit, the businesses received formal notice on July 6 that the exception would be eliminated, leaving about 40 days to reformulate products, redesign packaging, renegotiate manufacturing agreements and dispose of inventory that would no longer qualify for sale.

Biddle said any products remaining after this week’s deadline “will have to be destroyed; we won’t get any compensation or relief that I know of.”

According to the complaint, District Hemp has about \$10,000 in affected inventory and more than \$181,000 in outstanding obligations to creditors. The company has already reduced staff and expects to terminate the lease for its Leesburg store, the filing says.

Other plaintiffs describe even larger losses.

Cypress Hemp says products affected by the change account for about 95% of its revenue. Redfern Hemp of Caroline County estimates losses between \$110,000 and \$115,000, while Simply Hemp says restrictions could cost it roughly \$225,000 in revenue this year and force the closure of its Collinsville store.

“By compelling an immediate, involuntary forfeiture of existing hemp products and assets, the enforcement of the new law creates instant economic and financial damages to plaintiffs,” the complaint

states. Travis Lane, operations manager at Nova Hemp in Middletown, said the company spent the last year and a half preparing to distribute beverages statewide and now has products that may become unsellable under the new restrictions.

“I have pallets of lemonade for example that will become a sitting duck,” Lane said in an email. “We are trying to figure out how to keep our staff on board because they are trained and it’s a big investment for companies to train employees. We don’t know what to do with them.”

Virginia adopted its current hemp framework in 2023 through legislation sponsored by then-Sen. Emmett Hanger, a Republican from Augusta County. The law established the 2-mg limit and the 25-to-1 exception while requiring child-resistant packaging, independent laboratory testing, warning labels and a minimum purchase age of 21.

Biddle disputed the state’s argument that eliminating the exception is necessary to protect children, saying the industry already operates under strict safeguards.

“This is not about safety – this is about corporate consolidation,” Biddle said, “Businesses invested millions of dollars into this industry just to be shut out without any formal hearings about the redefinition.”

State says regulated cannabis market will replace current system

Virginia officials argue intoxicating hemp products have proliferated in vape shops, convenience stores and other retailers that are not subjected to the rules governing licensed marijuana dispensaries.

Only 60 acres of hemp were harvested in the commonwealth in 2025, according to the Governor’s Office, leaving the state largely dependent on products imported from elsewhere. Shifting state and federal policies have left hemp growers and retailers navigating an uncertain market.

A Spanberger spokesman said last week some businesses have exploited the gap between Virginia’s hemp and marijuana laws.

“For years, untested and highly-intoxicating products have flooded Virginia with little oversight, inadequate protections for kids and teenagers, and few tools for law enforcement to address the illicit market — all because of a loophole in state law that bad faith actors have exploited and pushed the limit of its intended use,” the spokesman said.

He said Virginia’s adult-use cannabis market will replace that system with a regulated framework designed to better protect consumers while creating new opportunities for small businesses and producers.

Under the budget approved in late June, recreational marijuana sales are scheduled to begin July 1, 2027. The Virginia Cannabis Control Authority will oversee the market and regulate hemp products under the new system.

Virginia legalized adult possession and home cultivation of marijuana in 2021 but did not establish legal retail sales. Previous efforts to create a recreational market either stalled in the General Assembly or were vetoed before lawmakers and Spanberger reached a budget agreement this year.

Chelsea Higgs Wise, executive director of Marijuana Justice, said Virginia risks repeating mistakes it made after legalizing marijuana possession, when consumers, businesses, local governments and law enforcement were left with little guidance about what the new law meant.

“No matter when hemp law changes occur, educating the public on these changes and their impact on consumers remains vital,” Higgs Wise said. “Since a replacement market for products with more than 2 mg of THC will not be available until July 1 of next year, the common-

wealth urgently requires more comprehensive guidance.”

She said that the state also needs to explain what businesses should do with products they cannot legally sell after Aug. 15 and help communities prepare for the possibility that some products move into the illicit market.

“A true public health approach should incorporate a micro-plan allowing business owners to clear their inventory over a set period, strategies for parents and communities to monitor the illicit market, and widespread public education to ensure overall consumer safety,” Higgs Wise said.

Jones said he is prepared to defend the new retail market once it is set up.

“This new law creates clear standards for business participation in the marketplace, and sets up enforcement mechanisms to address the illicit market and protect consumers from dangerous products,” Jones said in a text message. “My office stands ready to defend this law that will keep Virginians safe.”

But the businesses argue the new standard focuses on the total amount of THC in a package without considering its concentration, serving size and intoxicating effect. They also contend the state will treat THC products differently depending on whether they are sold by a hemp business or through the coming licensed marijuana market.

“It doesn’t make sense that in 11 months a consumer will be able to buy a 100-mg, 12-ounce drink of THC with 10 servings in it, and right now a 12-ounce, 10-mg drink with 250 mg of CBD in it will be illegal,” Lane said. “The state of Virginia already has a group of responsible business owners that could help them start up the entire market for them. It didn’t need to be a blackout.”

States take different approaches States have responded in different ways to the growth of intoxicating hemp products since the 2018 federal Farm Bill legalized hemp containing no more than 0.3% delta-9 THC by dry weight.

California imposed emergency regulations in 2024 prohibiting food, beverages and dietary supplements containing de-

tectable THC or other intoxicating cannabinoids. State officials later reported inspectors found nearly universal compliance after visiting more than 11,000 businesses.

Minnesota instead chose regulation, allowing hemp-derived beverages and edibles containing up to 5 mg of THC per serving and 50 mg per package, along with age restrictions and testing, labeling and packaging requirements.

Texas, however, took a more restrictive path. A prohibition on delta-9 and other THC isomers took effect this summer after the Supreme Court of Texas upheld regulators’ authority to classify delta-8 as a controlled substance.

Separate from the Virginia dispute, federal rules are also poised to tighten.

Last year, President Donald Trump signed a government funding measure that redefines hemp and, beginning Nov. 12, limits finished hemp-derived cannabinoid products to 0.4 mg of total THC per container — well below Virginia’s new 2-mg cap. The change is expected to remove the most intoxicating hemp products from the federally legal market.

Since signing the measure, however, Trump has called on Congress to preserve access to full-spectrum CBD products and directed his administration to work with lawmakers on revising the federal definition of hemp.

The Virginia businesses are asking the court to preserve the 25-to-1 exception while the case proceeds. Biddle said an injunction would give lawmakers time to either reconsider restrictions or determine whether affected businesses should be compensated.

“We are hoping that a judge will rule the law change unconstitutional,” she said. “If an injunction is granted, it will buy us time and allow lawmakers a chance to either figure out just compensation for the industry or reevaluate the removal of the 25:1 ratio altogether. I’m leaning towards the latter.”

For Lane, the immediate request is more time for businesses to adjust before the new limit takes effect.

“We seriously would prefer an official transition period,” he said.

Bulls and Broncs

Tuesday, September 8th
&
Wednesday, September 9th

7:30

Russell County Fair and Horseshow
&
Spur'n S Rodeo

Present

★Action packed family entertainment★

Bull and Bronc Riding, Mutton Busting & more

At the
Russell County Fairgrounds
237 Donnie Dean Drive - Castlewood, Va