

THE VIRGINIA MOUNTAINEER

The Voice of Buchanan County Since 1922

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VOL. 104 NO. 22 | **GRUNDY, VA. | THURSDAY, JUNE 18, 2026** | **TWO SECTIONS PLUS SUPPLEMENTS | $2**

BOS approves 2% bonus for constitutional officers, employees

By CHAD COOPER
coopkam@gmail.com

The Buchanan County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved a one-time 2% bonus for constitutional officers and their employees following a public hearing during the board's June 8 meeting.

The bonus will be funded primarily through state money, with a small local contribution from Buchanan County.

According to the ordinance approved by the board, the bonuses will be paid from the State-Supported Local Employee Bonus account for fiscal year 2025-26. Funding includes $68,229.65 from the Commonwealth of Virginia and a local contribution of $4,295 from Buchanan County.

County Administrator Craig Horn encouraged supervisors to approve the bonus.

"It is not something you should turn down," Horn said.

Under the ordinance, the bonus must be paid and reimbursed during fiscal year 2025-26. The measure was adopted in accordance with Virginia law, which requires a local ordinance to authorize bonus payments for local government employees.

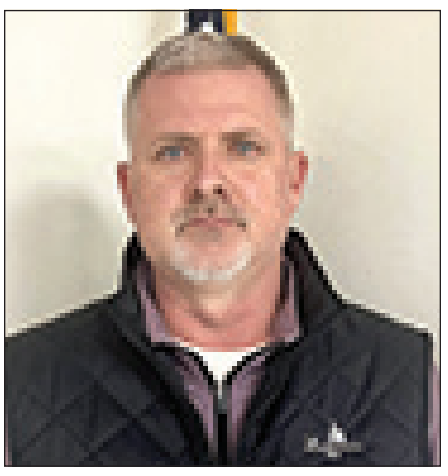
No members of the public spoke during the hearing.

Garden District Supervisor Jeff Cooper made a motion to close the public hearing, which was seconded by North Grundy Supervisor Lee Dotson. The motion passed unanimously.

Following the public hearing, Cooper moved to approve the one-time 2% salary bonus. Dotson seconded the motion, and the board unanimously approved the ordinance.

The bonus applies to Buchanan County constitutional offices and their employees and is intended to provide additional compensation through state-supported

SEE **2% BONUS | 4A**



CHAD COOPER | Virginia Mountaineer

Garden District Supervisor Jeff Cooper made the motion to approve a one-time 2% bonus for Buchanan County constitutional officers and their employees during the Buchanan County Board of Supervisors' June 8 meeting. The measure was approved unanimously following a public hearing.

Grundy Town Council approves $2.05M budget



CHAD COOPER | Virginia Mountaineer

The Grundy Town Council meeting on Tuesday, July 9, 2026, at the Grundy Town Offices in the Grundy Plaza.

By CHAD COOPER
coopkam@gmail.com

The Grundy Town Council unanimously approved the town's fiscal year 2026-27 budget during its June 9 meeting at the Town Office in the Grundy Plaza.

The approved balanced budget totals $2,050,717.76 in both projected revenues and expenditures and provides funding for town administration, public safety, street maintenance and sanitation services for the upcoming fiscal year.

Prior to the council meeting, a public hearing was held to receive comments on the proposed budget. No residents were present to speak during the hearing.

Later in the meeting, Mayor Chris Mitchell called for a motion to approve the budget. Council member Rebecca Elkins made the motion, which was seconded by Council member Taylor Burgess. The budget was approved unanimously by council members in attendance.

Administrative expenditures represent the largest portion of the budget at $859,433.76. The street department is budgeted to receive $475,650, while the police department is allocated $450,868. Funding also includes $152,848 for the fire department and $111,918 for the garbage department.

The town anticipates several major revenue sources

SEE **$2.05M BUDGET | 4A**

Supervisors approve fiscal year 2026-27 budget

By CHAD COOPER
coopkam@gmail.com

The Buchanan County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved the county's fiscal year 2026-27 budget during its June 8 meeting, adopting a spending plan totaling $197.7 million across all county funds.

The budget was approved following a motion by Garden District Supervisor Jeff Cooper and a second by North Grundy District Supervisor Lee Dotson. The measure passed unanimously.

The county's General County Fund (Fund 001) includes $61.12 million in expenditures and revenues. The budget allocates funding for county administration, public safety, education, public works, social services and other government operations.

Among the largest expenditures in the General County Fund are $9.93 million for Social Services and

SEE **2026-27 BUDGET | 4A**

Vansant McDonald's demolished to reopen this Fall

By CHAD COOPER
coopkam@gmail.com

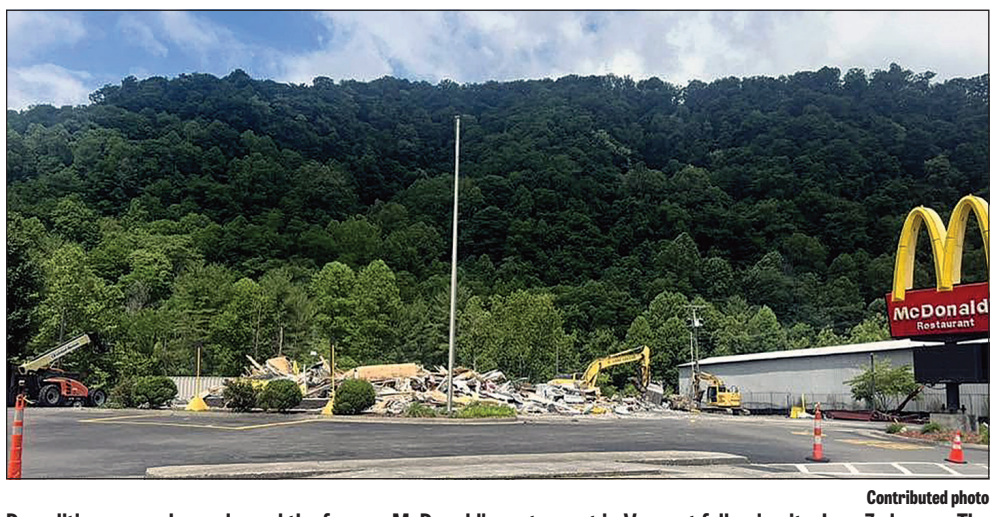
A longtime Buchanan County landmark is undergoing a major transformation as the McDonald's restaurant in Vansant has been demolished to make way for a complete rebuild.

The restaurant closed its doors on June 7, marking the end of operations at the existing building. Demolition crews recently razed the structure, and construction is expected to continue throughout the summer. According to information posted at the site, the restaurant is scheduled to reopen in mid-September with an updated design and modern features.

During the closure, customers are being directed to the McDonald's restaurant in Richlands.

The Vansant location has served the community for more than three decades. The restaurant officially opened on March 1, 1994, with a

SEE **VANSANT MCDONALDS | 4A**



Contributed photo

Demolition crews have cleared the former McDonald's restaurant in Vansant following its June 7 closure. The restaurant, which first opened in March 1994, is being rebuilt and is expected to reopen in mid-September with a new look and updated facilities.

BOS approves BCPS, PSA funding for fiscal year 2026-27

By CHAD COOPER
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The Buchanan County Board of Supervisors approved funding resolutions for Buchanan County Public Schools and the Buchanan County Public Service Authority during its June 8 meeting, authorizing a combined $11.3 million in local funding for the 2026-27 fiscal year.

The school funding resolution provides $8.1 million in local funding for Buchanan County Public Schools. The motion was made by Knox District Supervisor Trey Adkins and seconded by North Grundy Supervisor Lee Dotson. The measure passed unanimously.

Under the resolution, the county's local contribution will be transferred from the county operating budget to the school operating budget in 12 monthly installments of $675,000. The first payment will be made on or before July 15, 2026, with monthly payments continuing through June 15, 2027.

The board also approved a funding resolution for the Buchanan County Public Service Authority totaling $3.2 million.

Adkins made the motion to approve the PSA funding resolution and Garden District Supervisor Jeff Cooper seconded the motion.

The resolution originally called for the funds to be paid in six monthly installments of $533,333.33 beginning July 15 and continuing through

SEE **BOS APPROVES | 4A**

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Hope Matilda "Kim" Estep

HOPE MATILDA "KIM" ESTEP, 58, of Iron Station, NC, passed away Wednesday, June, 3, 2026, at her home following a brief illness. Born in Welch, WV, she was the daughter of the late Ervin Layne Sr. and Shirley Pauline (Church) Layne. She was a longtime resident of Iron Station NC and was of the Pentecostal Faith. She was a loving wife, mother, grandmother, sister and was a wonderful homemaker. She enjoyed coloring, watching her groundhog in the yard, camping, being with family and her grandchildren, watching her shows and was dedicated to her children and grandchildren.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her 1-sister: Melody Matney; 2-brother: Jerry Shafer, Ervin Layne Jr.; 1-nephew: Eddie Ray Matney Jr.

Those left to cherish her memory include her loving husband, Darrell Lee Estep, Iron Station, NC; 1-daughter: Emily Rochelle Estep, Iron Station, NC; 2-sons; Jacob Bradley (Chelsea) Estep, Iron Station, NC, Breydon Waters, Iron Station, NC; 2-grandbabies: Isabella Rose Estep, Noah James Estep; 3-sisters: Jennifer Snellenburger, Hurley, VA; Rhonda (Charlie) Goad, Blackstone, VA, Charlotte Prater, Lincolnton, NC; 1-brother: Gary Shafer, Hurley, VA.

Also, survived by several nieces and nephews.

Visitation was held at the WEO Church, Hurley, Saturday evening at 6:00 P.M. with services at 7:00 P.M.

Funeral Services for HOPE MATILDA "KIM" ESTEP were conducted Sunday, June 7, 2026 at 1:00 P.M. at the WEO Church, Hurley, VA with Matthew Davis officiating. Burial followed in the Layne Bottom Cemetery, Hurley, VA.



Hope Matilda "Kim" Estep

Active Pallbearers were family and friends.

Grundy Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of HOPE MATLIDA "KIM" ESTEP

Frank Kennith Matney

FRANK KENNITH MATNEY, 87, of Vansant, VA, passed away Saturday, June 6, 2026, at his daughter's home in Bluefield, WV. Born in Vansant, VA, he was the son of the late Alva Holland and Mary Ocie (Scott) Matney. He was a longtime resident of Buchanan County and was a member of Vansant Presbyterian Church. Frank graduated from Grundy High School in 1957 and later served in the United States Army. He was a loving husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather. He retired in 1997 from Harman Mining Company where he was a heavy equipment operator.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his wife, Betty Lou (Edwards) Matney (December 13, 2003); Son-in-Law: Seth Peters; Sister: Ellen "Sis" Arrington; Brothers: Sonny Matney, Ellis Matney, Tom Matney and Carl "Mook" Matney.

Those left to cherish his memory include his son, Kennith (Sallie) Matney of Christiansburg, VA; his daughter, Regina Peters of Bluewell, WV; Brother: Paul (Ilene) Matney of Haysi, VA; Grandsons: Justin Dunford, Jordan Peters, Kennith Ryan (Rebecca) Matney, Christopher Matney and Matthew Peters; Great-Grandson: Weston Kennith Matney.

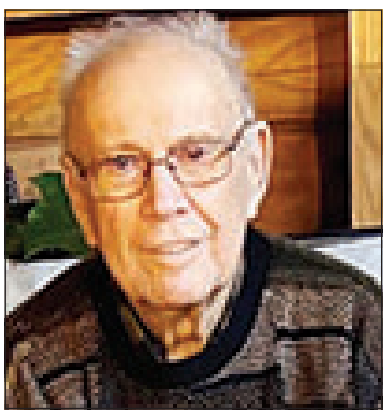
Also, survived by several nieces and nephews.

Special thanks to his cousin Mary Ruth Spencer who called him daily and was a great comfort to him.

Visitation was held at the Vansant Presbyterian Church Wednesday from 11:30 A.M. -12:00 P.M.

Funeral Services for FRANK KENNITH MATNEY were conducted Wednesday, June 10, 2026, at 12:00 P.M. at the Vansant Presbyterian Church with Pastor David Western officiating, burial followed in Greenhills Memory Gardens, Claypool Hill, VA.

Full Military Rites were conducted at the church by members of Childs-Gentry Post No. 7360 of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and John Ratliff Post No. 164 of the American Legion.



Jeremy Neil Chafins

Active Pallbearers were Justin Dunford, Jordan Peters, Ryan Matney, Christopher Matney and Matthew Peters.

Honorary Pallbearers were Paul Matney, Michael Matney, Weston Matney, David Cook, Junior Sexton and Dean Sexton.

In lieu of flowers, please make donations to Vansant Presbyterian Church.

Grundy Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of FRANK KENNITH MATNEY.

Jeremy Neil Chafins

JEREMY NEIL CHAFINS, age 49 was born on June 28, 1976. He passed on June 6, 2026.

He is preceded in death by paternal grandparents John and Emogene Chafins; maternal grandparents Hubert and Frances Leonard; uncles Gary Chafins, Delbert Chafins and Robin Leonard; and one aunt Elizabeth Leonard.

He is survived by his parents Thurl and Lea Ann Chafins; sister Leslie (Tim) Martin; twin sister Jaime Tidd (Joe Thompson); biological daughter Rebecca Chafins; two nephews Brady Martin and Ian Martin; and one niece Francesca Tidd.

Jeremy shared a close personal relationship with his dad, his best friend. He valued their productive working relationship as well. For twenty-two years he thoroughly enjoyed his position as a coal truck driver in his father's trucking company.

His mom had a special presence in his life. She served as homemaker, teacher, nurse and friend. His dear sisters have many fond memories of their childhood together. Pool days, long bike rides and summer vacations are especially memorable.

His favorite past time was long rides on his side by side. Occasionally the family dog would accompany him along the trails.

Jeremy's genuine personality and optimistic outlook were felt by all those around him. He met everyone with a smile on his face and a kind word on his lips.

Funeral services for Jeremy Neil Chafins wiere held Wednesday, June 11, 2026, at 1:00 p.m. at Shortridge-Ramey Funeral Home, Grundy, VA, with Evangelist Jim Belcher officiating. Entombment followed at Mountain Valley Memorial Park, Big Rock, VA.

The family received friends at the funeral home on Wednesday, June 10, after 6:00 p.m. with an evening service beginning at 7:00 p.m.



Jeremy Neil Chafins

Pallbearers were Danny Whitt, Michael Lester, Cody Blankenship, Richard Wolford, Randy Meade and Brian Johnson.

Honorary pallbearers wier Gary Owens and Dennis Ruble.

Online condolences may be sent to shortridgeramey.com.

The family of Jeremy Neil Chafins has entrusted the care of their loved one to Shortridge-Ramey Funeral Home of Grundy, VA.

Courthouse News

DEED RECORDED

May 18 – Jordan Nicole Lester, to Matthew Curtis Crouse, tract Patterson Fork, Meeting House Branch, Buchanan County, $10.00.

May 18 – Jennifer Silva Rawson, to Beatrice Lester, one acre, Little Prater Creek, Levisa River, Buchanan County, $1.00, deed of gift.

May 19 – Peggy R. Griffey, to Alexa Jami Stiltner, two tracts, Cove Branch, Bull Creek, Rock Lick District, deed of gift.

May 19 – Whitley G. Wagner, ETAL, to Sherry Honaker, ETAL, two-third undivided interest plus one-third undivided interest, 0.60 acre Garden District, Buchanan County, $45,000.00.

May 19 – Patricia Gay Church, ETAL, to Buchanan County Board of Supervisors. 0.42 acre Levisa Fork River, North Grundy District, $55,000.00.

May 19 – Dennis Blankenship, ETAL, to Virginia Department of Transportation, tracts Buchanan County, $700.00.

May 19 – Cumberland Plateau Company INC., to Industrial Development Authority, Lot 20 & 21 of Southern Gap Phase 1A subdivision, deed of gift.

May 19 – Charles Smith, to Bruce Daughtery, ETAL, half acre Lesters Fork, Knox Creek, Buchanan County, $1,000.00.

May 19 – Ellis L. Wright, to Michael Lester, ETAL, 19 acres, Little Prater Creek, Buchanan County, $5,000.00.

May 19 – Ted Napier, to Bryan Boyd, 20 acres Lower Left Hand Fork, Bull Creek, Levisa River, $4,000.00.

May 20 – R.L. Hatfield to Allen Owen, 15 acres Tug River, Buchanan County, $3,750.00.

May 20 – Melvin May, to Michael Lester, ETAL, tract Right Hand Fork, Paw Paw Creek, Knox Creek, Knox District, $4,000.00.

May 20 – Joseph Michael Magee, to Clevinger Enterprises LLC., two tracts, Levisa River, Grundy District, Grundy District, Buchanan County, $4,250.00.

May 20 – Sidney A. Clevinger, to Tina Clevinger, tract Bull Creek, Louvisa Fork, Big Sandy River, $57,500.00.

May 21 – Joseph Wayne Kast, to Betty Hagerman, 8.80 acres, Harrys Branch, Lynn Camp Creek, Dismal River, Levisa River, Buchanan County, $.00.

May 21 – Kimberly Denise Rice Elswick, to Jim Rice, Jr., tract Poplar Creek, $1.00, deed of gift.

May 21 – Clarence Ray Foster, ETAL, to Brittany Ellen Moore, half acre Poplar Creek, Levisa River, $1.00, deed of gift.

May 21 – Kyler Lloyd, to Johnny Earl Lamb, two tracts, Big Prater Creek, Levisa River, South Grundy District, $1.00, deed of gift.

May 22 – Joshua Brian Stevens, to Alesia E. Owens, two acres, Hurricane Creek, Russell Fork River, $5,000.00.

May 22 – Tyler Dean Stacy, ETAL, to Johnny Harrison Marrs, ETAL, tract Left Fork, Rock Lick Creek, Levisa River, $1.00 deed of gift.

May 22 – Delilia Carol Hurley, to Haley Gibson, tract Horn Fork, Knox Creek, $10.00, deed of gift.

May 22 – Delila Carol Hurley, ETAL, to Haley Gibson, tract Blackeys Fork, Knox Creek, $10.00, deed of gift.

May 26 – Jim Rice, Jr., to Julia Renee Rice Jackson, four acres Poplar Creek, deed of gift.

May 27 – Roger Blankenship, ETAL, to David Benjamin Weise, two tracts Slate Creek, Levisa River, North Grundy District, deed of gift.

May 27 – David Benjamin Weise, to Mountain Mission School, two tracts Slate Creek, Levisa River, North Grundy District, deed of gift.

May 28 – Vicki Teresa Shortridge, ETAL to Jeff Childress, ETAL, 3.7 acres Lynn Camp Creek, $25,000.00.

May 29 – James Roger Brown, to Mark Jackson, two tracts Little Prater Creek, Levisa River, $1.00, deed of gift.

May 29 – Craig K. Layne, to Craig K. Lane, tract Little Paw Paw Creek, Russell Fork River, deed of gift.

May 29 – Wanda Lou Lane, to Craig Kevin Lane, 11.864 acres Little Paw Paw Creek, Russell Fork River, deed of gift.

May 29 – Wanda Lou Lane, to Christian Seth Lane, tract Paw Paw, Russell Fork River, deed of gift.

May 29 – Ronald H. Moore, Jr., to Danny Johnson, ETAL, six acres Portico Hollow Rock Lick Creek, Levisa River, $6,000.00.

May 29 – George Thomas Grindstaff, to Connie Elizabeth McClain, Lots 9, 10, 11 & 12 in Block BB on Map of the Southern Side of College Addition, Slate Creek, $90.000.00.

May 29 – Steven Sutherland, to Joshua Long, ETAL, tract Little Prater Creek, Levisa River, $30,000.00.

Town Council hears monthly police report, other projects

By CHAD COOPER
coopkam@gmail.com

The Town of Grundy Police Department responded to 206 calls for service during May, according to Police Chief Seth McGlothlin.

McGlothlin provided the department's monthly report during the June 9 meeting of the Grundy Town Council at the Town Office in the Grundy Plaza.

Of the 206 calls, 34 occurred outside the town limits, and 34 resulted in reportable incidents and investigations. The department made nine arrests, served 11 criminal papers, investigated four reportable traffic accidents, conducted 70 traffic stops and issued 38 summonses.

During his report, McGlothlin also recognized Officer Chapman for reaching a milestone anniversary with the department. Chapman began his service with the Town of Grundy Police Department on May 28, 2001.

McGlothlin informed council members that he will be traveling to the Washington County Sheriff's Office to conduct its official on-site reaccreditation review for the next couple of days. He also said he will be teaching at the police academy the following week and plans to complete the month by renewing his instructor certification.

In other business, Town of Grundy's IDA properties manager and Grundy Town Manager Dennis Ramey updated council members on the ongoing renovation of the Richardson Building in Downtown Grundy adjacent to the Buchanan County Courthouse.

Ramey said AEP has informed the town that Maple Street, which runs between the Richardson Building and the courthouse, will need to be closed for a day while crews install electrical service to the building.

"We may have to have Maple Street shut down, probably one day, when we put power across it," Ramey said. "It has to be concreted. It can be 24 inches deep, but the full 24 inches has to be concreted back over top of that power."

Ramey said Appalachian Power would not allow the utility line to be covered with gravel and paved over.

"They want it isolated under the concrete, so we will probably have to shut down that street completely when we dig it, get the conduit in it and then we've got to have a concrete truck sitting there ready to dump it in it," Ramey said. "It may be overnight that we have to leave it and set and lock it down and then just open it up the next day. That is the only way the power company would agree to it."

Ramey reported that the installation of ceiling tiles in the Richardson Building has been completed.



CHAD COOPER | Virginia Mountaineer

Richardson Building renovation work continues in downtown Grundy. Town Manager Dennis Ramey told the Grundy Town Council on June 9, 2026, that ceiling tile installation has been completed and that the project is "coming together pretty well" as crews continue work on the facility.

"It's coming together quite well, really," he said.

Ramey also shared positive news regarding activity at the theater inside the Grundy Community Center. He said monthly ticket sales increased from approximately $20,000 to $24,000.

Maintenance Supervisor Tony Stiltner provided an update on the town's public works operations during May.

Stiltner said crews have been working to replace lighting at the Grundy Community Center. A shipment of new fixtures arrived recently, and workers plan to continue the project on rainy days by focusing on the theater area.

He also reported that the town's new garbage truck is temporarily out of service. A mechanic from Kenworth is working on the vehicle and is expected to complete repairs once a needed part arrives.

Stiltner said the town's seasonal mowing and weed-cutting crews are keeping up with their workload.

"They are doing pretty good," Stiltner said. "I think they are."

QUESTIONS? Call
The Virginia Mountaineerat
(540) 389-9355

Hundreds attend Chamber's Family Fun Day, Drone Show

By CHAD COOPER
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Families from across Buchanan County and the surrounding areas gathered at Poplar Gap Park on June 7 for the Buchanan County Chamber of Commerce's Family Fun Day & Drone Show.

The free event featured food trucks, local vendors, inflatables, carnival-style games, face painting, live entertainment, karaoke and activities designed for families of all ages. Throughout the afternoon and evening, attendees filled the park to enjoy the festivities and celebrate both the Town of Grundy's 150th anniversary and America's 250th anniversary.

According to the Chamber, hundreds of families attended throughout the day, while many estimated that the combined crowds at Poplar Gap Park and nearby viewing areas for the evening drone show reached into the thousands.

The day's activities included performances by local entertainers, community organizations, businesses and vendors, creating an atmosphere of fellowship and community pride.

The celebration concluded with a drone show presented by Firefly Drone Shows. As darkness fell, hundreds of spectators gathered across the park to watch the illuminated aerial display, which served as the grand finale to the event.



Contributed photo

The words "Town of Grundy" light up the night sky during the Firefly Drone Shows finale at the Buchanan County Chamber of Commerce's Family Fun Day on June 7 at Poplar Gap Park. The event celebrated the Town of Grundy's 150th anniversary and America's 250th anniversary.

"The Buchanan County Chamber of Commerce's Family Fun Day was a tremendous success, bringing together families from across the region for a day of fun, entertainment, and community fellowship as part of the celebration of the Town of Grundy's 150th Anniversary and America's 250th Anniversary," said Amanda Shafer, executive director of the Buchanan County Chamber of Commerce.

"We were thrilled with the turnout and the excitement throughout the day," Shafer said. "Family Fun Day was exactly what we hoped it would be—a chance for families to come together, make memories, enjoy time with one another, and celebrate our community. Seeing hundreds of people stay for the drone show finale was the perfect way to end a wonderful day."

Shafer said the event provided families with an opportunity to spend quality time together while enjoying entertainment, food, games and activities in a welcoming community setting.

The Chamber expressed appreciation to the many sponsors and supporters who helped make the event possible. Diamond sponsors included the Buchanan County Board of Supervisors, the Town of Grundy and Firefly Drone Shows. Appalachian Power served as a Gold Sponsor, while Noah Horn Well Drilling was recognized as a Silver Sponsor. Community sup-

SEE **FAMILY FUN DAY | 4A**



Contributed photo

A young participant tests his skills on the mechanical bull during the Buchanan County Chamber of Commerce's Family Fun Day at Poplar Gap Park. The attraction was one of many activities that kept families entertained throughout the day-long community celebration.

LOOKING BACK
From our files

By CHAD COOPER
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55 YEARS AGO
JUNE 17, 1971

At a meeting last Thursday afternoon, Llewellyn Shortridge was elected president of the Grundy Business and Professional Association for the new year. Other officers selected were Claude Davis, vice-president and Pailine Tylender, secretary.

Miss Patricia Ann Smith was first runner-up in the Miss Clinch Valley Bathing Beauty Contest, held Saturday night, June 5th. Miss Smith, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Smith of Hurley, is a 1979 graduate of Hurley High School and is currently attending East Tennessee State University.

45 YEARS AGO
JUNE 18, 1981

Shirley Belcher of Buchanan County was recently elected to the Tech Advisory Council. During their most recent triennial meeting in Virginia Beach, the Advisory Council to the Center for Volunteer Development at Virginia Tech elected Rusty Erkin (chairman), Botetourt County; Dorothy Blanchard (vice chairman), Blacksburg; and Belcher, secretary-treasurer, from Buchanan County.

Recently named to the board of directors of the Mountain Paradise Rest Home, Leonard Keen of Whitewood. Keen is an employee of the Jewell Smokeless Coal Company. He will serve on the board at the facility, which serves disabled and elderly adults and is licensed for 19 residents.

35 YEARS AGO
JUNE 20, 1991

Grundy Town Council members are pursuing a plan to cut parking spaces at the Grundy Parking Building in order to construct a movie theatre, according to a surprise announcement made Thursday during the Town Council meeting. Council member Ed Bunn told other council members that he had been working for some time with the Virginia Department of Transportation to turn the third floor of the Grundy parking garage into a town-operated theater.

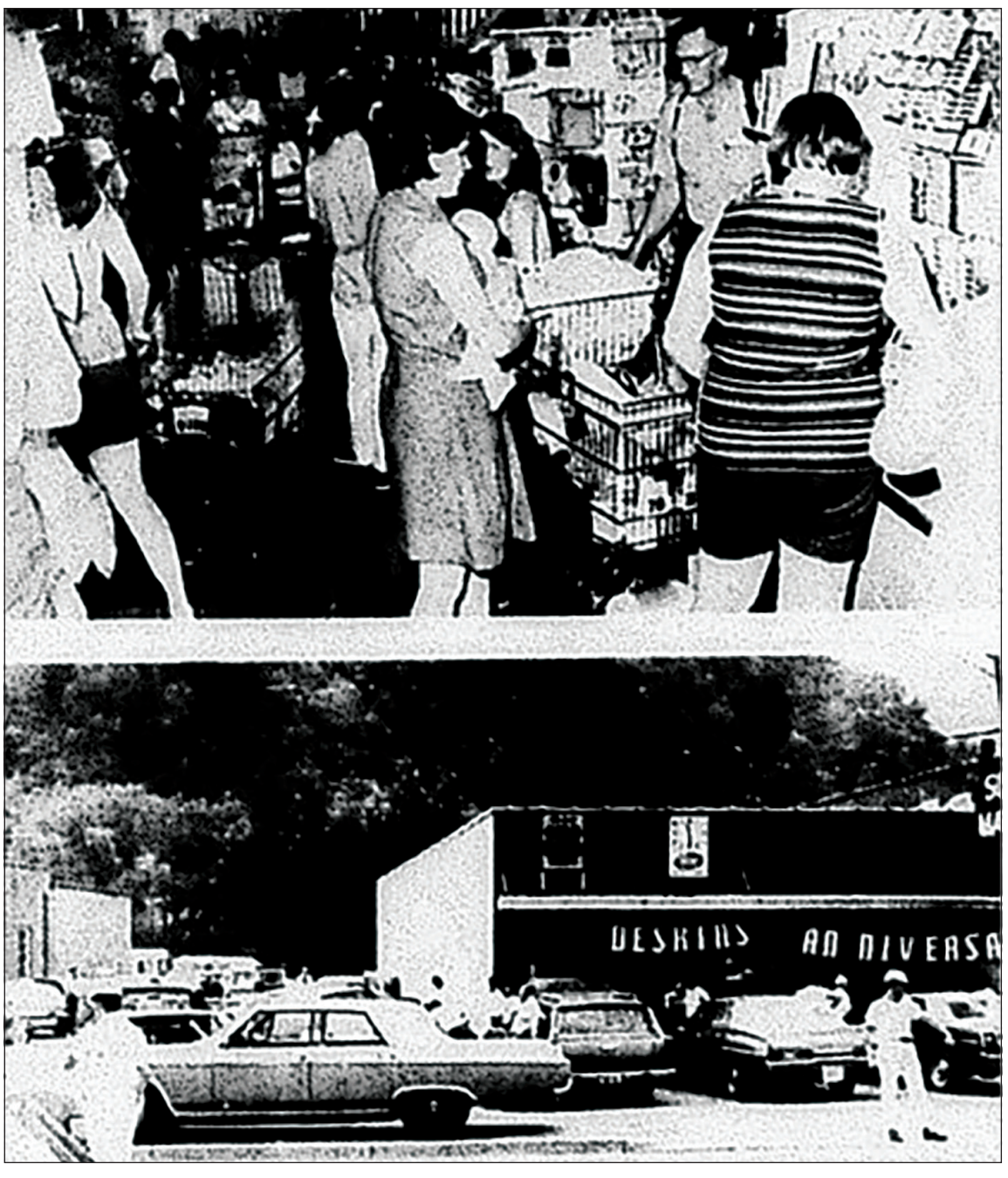
William D. Kilgore Jr., of Grundy, was presented with the Distinguished Mining Alumni Award by the Department of Mining and Minerals Engineering at Virginia Tech. The presentation was delivered at the AMC Mining Convention earlier this month in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

25 YEARS AGO
JUNE 21, 2001

The foursome of Joe Addison, Glen Turner, Ken Potter and Hassell Wooldridge walked away with the championship flight trophy last Friday evening as they took top honors in the third annual Buchanan County Chamber of Commerce golf tournament held at Willowbrook Country Club. A total of 88 golfers -- 22 four-man teams -- made up the field for this year's event.

The 12th annual YMCA Co-ed Summer Basketball Camp, conducted by Grundy High School head girls' basketball coach Leslie Horne and several assistants, saw 70 athletes take part in this year's camp. The camp also recognized and awarded campers of the day and a camper of the week. The Camper of the Week award went to Bobby Peck, a rising fifth grader at Riverview Elementary. Bobby, the son of David and Selena Peck, won a one-year student membership to the YMCA for his efforts.

GOOD OL DAYS



Virginia Mountaineer

PART OF THE TREMENDOUS CROWD shopping at Deskins Supermarket during its Big Anniversary Sale. The store was packed with customers throughout the three-day event. Store management extended a special thanks to the Buchanan County Rescue Squad for assisting with traffic control in front of the store during the celebration.

Congressman Griffith: Librarian of Congress

The U.S. Constitution outlines three branches of government.

Article I concerns the functions and duties of the Legislative Branch.

The Constitution provides for Congress to lay and collect taxes, raise and support Armies and make laws, among other powers.

Then comes Article II. An Executive Branch is responsible for enforcing the laws.

Taking the mantle of Executive power is the President. The President serves as Commander in Chief of the U.S. military, makes treaties and controls appointments to the Executive.

Article III details the role of a Judicial Branch.

This section establishes a U.S. Supreme Court and a robust legal system. This system reviews potential Constitutional conflicts that arise from legal and government actions.

These three Articles are foundational pillars of our government.

However, over time the lines of government functions have blurred between the Executive and Legislative Branches.

For example, I have worked in Congress to deliver clarity on the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR).

The Constitution reserves for Congress the powers to impose tariffs on imported goods and regulate commerce with foreign countries.

Yet, over several generations, Congress has delegated control of trade policy to the President by allowing the Executive Branch to impose tariffs if certain trade conditions, as defined by Congress, are met.

In the 1960s and 1970s, Congress passed laws to establish a USTR and expand that office's responsibilities.

As a result, every president since President Kennedy has appointed someone to lead the USTR office.

This discrepancy in U.S. trade policy leadership has created confusion between the Executive and Legislative Branches.

Article I, Section 8 says Congress has the authority "to regulate commerce with the foreign nations…" As someone who believes Congress should exercise its authority granted by the Constitution, this USTR dynamic needs correction.

For multiple Congresses, under presidents of both parties, I have written and introduced a bill that would redesignate the USTR office as a function of the Legislative Branch, not the Executive Branch.



MORGAN **GRIFFITH**

WEEKLY REPORT FROM THE CAPITOL

This year, I am also the leader of another bill that designates certain government officers and addresses other constitutional inconsistencies.

My bill, H.R. 6028, the Legislative Branch Agencies Clarification Act, affects the government offices of the Library of Congress, Government Publishing Office (GPO) and U.S. Copyright Office.

Respectively, the three leaders of these offices are the Librarian of Congress, the GPO Director and the Register of Copyrights.

Each of these officers serve as valuable resources to their institutions, Congress and the American people.

However, control over these officials has been an issue of contention.

In the cases of the Librarian and GPO Director, these officers are directly responsive and accountable to the needs of the Legislative Branch. They lead agencies that preserve wide varieties of documents, promote legislative access and support other legislative functions.

Meanwhile, the job that the Register of the Copyrights Office does properly belongs with the Executive Branch.

Despite this fact, the president has had the power to appoint the Librarian as well as the GPO Director.

My bill establishes a new Congressional appointment framework for the Librarian of Congress and GPO Director.

This framework is very similar to the appointment process for the Architect of the Capitol, which is another legislative agency that tends to the affairs of Congress.

Meanwhile, the Register of the Copyright Office is subject to a different process.

Under the current process, the Librarian appoints the Register.

Nonetheless, the Register performs many Executive-like functions, as their Office plays a key role in the administration of copyright registrations.

My bill sets forth a new appointment process for the Register. With the advice and consent of the U.S. Senate, the President will rightfully appoint this official.

I believe that because of the help in drafting the final language from the Trump Administration, Republican Chairman Bryan Steil and Democratic Ranking Member Joe Morelle of the Committee on House Administration, and former Virginia Congressman Bob Goodlatte, this bill is a great example of collaborative legislative action which restores the historic balance between the two Branches.

The House passed the bill without objection in June.

I am hopeful the Senate does the same to deliver the bill to President Trump's desk.

These may seem like small steps, but they show that Congress is willing to address constitutional inconsistencies and reassert its Article I responsibilities.

That said, I will continue to push legislation that helps the Legislative Branch serve the American people as set forth in the Constitution.

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/.

Rocklick Area News

Hello Readers

Sunday morning finds me still in Johnson City with Ray. They've done several tests and we're waiting on results.

I watched our church service on YouTube. Brother Shane Charles was there and sang one of my favorite hymns, "Here I Am". I pray when my time comes I can hold up my hand and show God Here I Am! Sister Pauline Wilson got up and sang and praised God for bringing her through the sickness and blessing her to be able to walk to the front!

Brother Eddie Wilson brought the message, Judgement Day is Soon to Come. He read Isaiah 3:1-5, Isaiah 3:16-26, John 10:11 and John 10:27-28. He was filled with the spirit today, a powerful message! We all need to make decisions that will please God.

Monday morning still in Johnson City. He's feeling better but the ribs are going to take a while to heal. The days are going way too slow!

Tuesday morning still in Johnson City. He's doing much better and was told he could go home tomorrow, Hallelujah!! I went to the hospital gift shop and they've got such a good sale going on I bought a few things. I look for bargains wherever I am and 95% off is too good to resist!!

We had a very bad storm come through here. I had just stepped off the elevator and started down the hallway when the power went off!

Happy 87th birthday to Miss Pauline!! You're a true miracle, God has brought you through so much!!

He finally got released Wednesday afternoon. We had a good trip home and our little dog was very glad to see us! He's very sore and moving slow but glad to be home.

The mobile food truck, Feeding Southwest Virginia, an equal opportunity provider, was at Council Park today (Thursday) and served 130 households.

Happy 88th birthday to my aunt, Ruby Henson!



DEBBIE **FOSTER**

ROCKLICK AREA NEWS

276-935-8296

I've had two unspoken prayer requests for a while and God is moving on my needs, God's time not my time!! Thank you Lord!!

Reminder, Feeding my Sheep will be doing their giveaway Saturday June 20th.

The giveaway starts about 9:00 am and goes until 1:00 pm. Because of construction at the old Russell Prater School location cars will be lining up near the old Sykes (current EOC) building on Southern Gap. Someone will be there to assist you.

My prayer list is long: Shannon and Christine (needs urgent prayers!), Sarah, Maranda, Shawne, Brad, Joann, Michelle, Linda, Alvin, Mac, Gary, Jerry and Vicky, Betty and Arlene, Leroy, Linda and James, Martha, Amelia, Teresa, Gary and Tammy, Jacob, Shawn, Charles, Eugene, Melinda, Stanley (fractured back) and Crystal, Steve, Scotty, Brother Kenny, Freddie and Sheila, Darrell and Vicki, Hudson, Amber, Dennis (urgent prayers needed!) and Kathy, Courtland, Amy, Brother Bruce's brother in law, Anthony, Henry, Jerry, Farley and family, Pastor Gene and Joyce Miller, Lilly, Clarence and Reba, Lona (shoulder surgery went well), Matt, Brenda, Justin, Glenda (needs urgent prayers!), Shirley, JJ, Mike, Jack, Pastor Ronnie and Alma Sliger, Colton and family, Timmy, Riley, Darrell, Debbie (pray hard for my sweet friend!), Maryann (doing better, keep praying!), Brian, Miss Gertrude (keep praying for answers for this sweet lady!), Patty, Bill, Charles and Von, Ann, Jack and Annette, Curtis, Susie, Carol (blood clot), Ronnie and Carol, Mike,Thelma, Kim, Judy, Malva , Gary and Linda, Randy, Tyler, Miss Jean, Jerry, D.C., June, Rachel, Jason, Lonie, Dean, Ralph, Blakely, Ashleigh, Jim, Brenda, Barbara, Rodney, Chris and family, Lillian, Geraldine, Colin, Snoda, Judy, Mike and Dee, Bryan and Tina PPTA, Pam, Phillip, Peggy and Family, Renee, Melissa, Charlie, Linda, Gordon, Miss Irene, Elmo, Teresa, Chris, Anthony, Miss Pauline, Henson (keep praying!), Margie, Melinda, Archie and Cathy, Martha, Colton, Ira, Jennifer, Daniel, Tracy, Glenda, Anderson, Nicole, Dave, Hope, Liz, Tony and Pam, Barbara, Danny, Brenda, Nancy, Joe and Sherry, Gail, Bobby, Christie, Kenny, Baby Weston, Sandy, Buck and Harriet, Raymond, Mary, Wanda, Hazel and Sammy, Lois, Darrell, Sue, Jeff, Shirley, little Zach (keep praying!), Bobby, Jerry, Mary Lou, Dreama (holding her own, keep praying!), and Ray and I. God knows every need…

If any of my Rocklick neighbors have anything they want me to share please call me at 935-8296 or email me at dfoster_59@yahoo.com.

I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

John 10:11 KJV

Until next week…

Jesus is soon to come…

Israel Being Isolated

Are we witnessing the beginning of Israel's isolation?

According to God's word in Zechariah 12:1-3, verse three says, "In that day I will make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people. All that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it."



JERRY **WARD**

THE WATCHMAN

I believe that in verse three, when it says "all people," it indicates that the church has been raptured at this time. The first phrase refers to a stone that is difficult to lift or move. I believe that at this time the world has entered the tribulation, as described in Matthew 24:21-22. Verse 22 says, "And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved," which refers to Israel coming close to extinction, but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

In these scriptures, Jesus calls Israel his elect, and those days shall be shortened by the second coming of the Lord to the Battle of Armageddon to save his people from extinction.

Joel 3:1-8 gives the reason why God does this. Verse 2 says, "I will also gather all nations and will bring them down into the valley of Jehosaphat and will plead with them for my people and my heritage, Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations and have divided my land."

Here, you see God calls Israel his people and heritage. Remember, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who died on the cross for our sins, was Jewish. The Bible says in Galatians 3:14 that the blessings of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ. Galatians 3:29 says, "If ye be Christ, then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise."

Romans 11:17-21 warns us not to boast against the branches, which are Israel. If we do so, we have no part with the root. We are living in scary times. The Bible says in II Timothy 3:1 that this is known also in the last days. Perilous times mean dangerous times. We are entering this time frame. The Biblical scripture declares it, and we are seeing the end-time stage being set before our eyes.

Some of the things I have heard in the past few weeks really scare me about the future of our world. I am watching the most pro-Israel president make statements openly about Israel.

I have never heard any president speak so openly about the best ally. President Trump told Benjamin Netanyahu that you have to stand down while being attacked by ballistic missiles. It's people having to take refuge in bomb shelters. If not, you will be standing alone.

Would the US isolate Israel and abandon it, God forbid? But according to Zechariah 12:1-3, that day is coming because the Bible says it will. In the last few years, we have heard in the streets of America and on college campuses calls for death to Israel from the river to the sea. We see many in the media and talk show hosts making strong statements concerning Israel. Remember what the Bible says in Genesis 12:3, "I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curseth thee, and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."

The day we abandoned Israel is the day God abandoned America. Remember what God said in Isaiah 62:1, "For Zion's sake I will not hold my peace, for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest." Psalm 121:4 says, "Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep."

Look at what God said in Deuteronomy 11:11-12, "But the land, whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh of the rain of heaven. Verse 12, a land which the Lord careth for. The eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year."

God's eyes are always watching over it day and night. Mr. President, watch how you handle Israel. Please do not divide God's land. Whoever does so will be in trouble with God. Remember Joel 3:2. God is angry with those who part the land that God gave to Israel by covenant to Abraham (Genesis 15:18). God said in Zechariah 2:8, "For he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye." God said in Obadiah 1:15, "What thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee; thy reward shall return upon thine own head."

I hope the Lord has used me in this article to open some eyes to the times we are living in. May God bless you and make his face shine upon you.

Remember to mark your calendars for Generations United Revival Come Alive Virginia, which will be held August 6-8 at the Consol Energy Mainstage inside the Roger and Susie Rife Park.

Featured speakers and guests include Joel Horn and youth from his church on Thursday, August 6th. Friday night, August 7th, Stephen and Lori Ward of the Living Room program will be with us all three nights and will be traveling from California, along with 15 other people from across the nation.

Saturday, August 8th, JT Harman and youth singing group, along with Jeremy and Ami Mikles. Many youth will be ministering each night in song or skit. Please come out and be with us. It's going to be an awesome time in the Lord. Bring a chair. We will be outside. Thank you.

Stay Tuned: The Watchma

THE VIRGINIA MOUNTAINEER

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The Savy Senior: How to Save on Prescription Eyeglasses



SAVVY SENIOR

Dear Savvy Senior,

What tips can you recommend for finding affordable prescription eyeglasses? I currently have vision coverage through my employer's insurance plan but will lose it when I retire in a few months and sign up for Medicare.

--Nearsighted Nancy

Dear Nancy,

You're wise to plan ahead. Eyeglasses can be expensive. A basic pair often runs $150 to $300, and bifocals or progressive lenses can easily double or triple that. The good news is that with a few strategies, you can keep costs manageable once you retire and transition to Medicare.

Medicare & insurance

Original Medicare and Medigap plans generally do not cover routine eye exams or eyeglasses, except after cataract surgery, when Part B helps pay for corrective lenses. But many Medicare Advantage plans, also called Part C, do include vision benefits. These plans, offered by private insurers, must cover everything original Medicare does and often include extras like dental, hearing and prescription drug coverage.

That said, I would not choose a Medicare Advantage plan just for vision coverage alone, but it is worth understanding what is available. To compare plans in your area, visit medicare.gov/plan-compare or call 800-633-4227. Be sure to check the details to confirm coverage for routine eye exams, frames and lenses.

You can also buy a stand-alone vision insurance plan. Major carriers like Humana, Blue Cross Blue Shield, Aetna and UnitedHealthcare, along with specialty providers like VSP and EyeMed, offer plans with premiums typically ranging from about $10 to $30 per month. Before enrolling, compare the costs and benefits to make sure the savings on exams and glasses outweigh the premiums and copays.

Discount stores

Buying glasses from discount retailers can save you a substantial amount. Warehouse clubs like Costco Optical and Sam's Club Optical offer eye exams typically ranging from $80 to $130 depending on location, with basic prescription glasses starting around $120. You will need a membership, but the savings can often justify the cost.

Other good options include Walmart Vision Center, Target Optical and independent optical shops. Prices vary, so it pays to shop around and ask about package deals or seasonal promotions. An AARP membership can also provide discounts at retailers like LensCrafters, Target Optical and Visionworks.

Buy online

Ordering glasses online is another excellent way to save, often cutting costs significantly compared to traditional retailers. Reputable sites like Warby Parker, EyeBuyDirect and GlassesUSA offer single vision glasses starting around $70, with progressive lenses typically ranging from $120 to $200 depending on features.

You will need a current prescription and your pupillary distance, which may be included on your prescription or can be measured by your provider or even at home. Many online retailers offer virtual try on tools so you can see how frames will look before you buy.

Also pay attention to lens options such as anti-reflective coating, scratch resistant coating and blue light filtering. For most people, a basic pair with durable coatings is usually sufficient.

Low-income assistance

If your income is limited, local clinics may offer free or reduced cost eye exams and eyeglasses. Your local Lions Club is another excellent resource. Many chapters sponsor vision programs or can direct you to nearby services. You can find your local club at lionsclubs.org/en/start-our-approach/club-locator.

The nonprofit New Eyes also provides eyeglasses through a voucher program for people in financial need, working with participating providers to supply frames and lenses at little or no cost.

With a little planning, you can keep your vision sharp without overspending. Between Medicare options, discount retailers, online shopping and community programs, there are plenty of ways to find quality eyeglasses at a price you can afford.

Send your questions or comments to questions@savvysenior.org, or to Savvy Senior, P.O. Box 5443, Norman, OK 73070.

Spotlight on the CAM: Theatre Guild of Buchanan County

By JODI REYNOLDS WITH DEBBIE JACKSON

A new art class is coming to The CAM. Create With Joy will be led by local artist Debbie Jackson on Tuesday, June 23. The event promises an uplifting evening of art, creativity, and self-expression open to everyone. With Debbie's guidance and joyful presence, participants can set their inner critic aside and pick up a brush without the pressure of painting to perfection.



Contributed photo

Local artist Debbie Jackson will lead "Create With Joy" at The CAM on June 23, 2026, inviting participants to explore creativity through a relaxed, judgment-free evening of artistic expression. Jackson combines her background in the healing arts with a passion for helping others reconnect with the joy of creating.

For much of her life, Debbie Jackson believed a common misconception: that artists are born with special talent and creativity belongs to a select few. Although she was always drawn to art and crafting, she assumed that "real artists" were the ones who pursued formal training or seemed naturally gifted. Today, Jackson sees creativity very differently.

"I've come to believe that we are all creatives. We are all born artists," she says. "We may express creativity in different ways, but creativity is part of who we are."

Growing up, Jackson was surrounded by family members who loved creating. Both grandmothers were makers, one quilting and the other crocheting doll clothes. Her parents enjoyed decorative painting, woodworking, and a variety of artistic projects.

"Dad taught me to use a bandsaw, and we created many things together," Jackson recalls. "Creativity was woven into everyday life, and crafting together became a family tradition."

Later, she shared that same love of creating with her daughters through community art classes and creative projects. Those experiences reinforced her belief that creativity is meant to be enjoyed rather than judged.

Visits to the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., along with a transformative summer in Europe exploring museums, churches, architecture, and cultural landmarks, deepened her appreciation for art. Standing before the works of masters such as Van Gogh and Monet, she found herself captivated not only by their beauty but by the mystery of their creation.

"I would stand in wonder and awe, studying the light, the shadows, the colors, and the brush strokes," she says. "How did they capture the feeling of such beauty and magnificence?"

That curiosity remains today. When viewing artwork, she continues to study technique, composition, and the interplay of color and light. Above all, she loves color itself.

"I love color! Even my clothing choices reflect that. I dress to make me happy!" Jackson says.

As owner of Serenity Now Massage and Yoga and a longtime practitioner of the healing arts, Jackson has spent more than two decades helping people improve their physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being. Her passion for expressive arts has become a natural extension of that work, blending creativity with the science of healing.

In her workshops, often called "playshops," participants are encouraged to release perfectionism, quiet their inner critic, and reconnect with the joy of creating. The emphasis is not on producing a perfect piece of art but on embracing the process itself. Jackson believes creative expression can reduce stress, release tension, and provide a healthy outlet for emotions.

"When people gather with a shared intention to create, the experience becomes more than making art," she explains. "It becomes a space for connection, encouragement, healing, and growth."

Jackson is also a founding member of the Artisans of Buchanan County G.U.I.L.D., a community dedicated to Growing, Uniting, Imagining, Learning, and Doing. She emphasizes that everyone is creative.

"The challenge is not learning how to create," she says. "It's learning how to quiet the inner critic long enough to begin. Art isn't about proving that you're talented. It's about giving yourself permission to create."

Tickets are available at www.seeyouatthecam.com. Seats are limited, so reserve your spot today. Light refreshments and all supplies are included, and additional concessions will be available for purchase. See you at The CAM.

Adult education connection

Learning or relearning concepts as an adult is often quite different from learning when we were children. There are certain principles that must be applied for us to be more successful at obtaining and retaining concepts along with new information. Adult learners are much more self-directed and motivated than young learners.



Adults tend to learn because they want to learn and see the benefits, rather than being expected to do so. Even though adults may have more motivation, it does not necessarily mean that they will learn just anything. Often, adults must see the purpose of learning something and why it will be beneficial.

Adult learners rely heavily on their experiences when they engage in learning, and they benefit from training programs that understand this. Content that draws from real-world examples, relatable scenarios, and builds on direct experience will lead to a more meaningful understanding of the subject. Although using existing experience can help adults more quickly understand current information, there could be a downside. The experience that learners draw from might be outdated or incomplete. Learners should be aware of these challenges and expect to learn how to guide themselves to make new conclusions. Understanding how to search for resources, proven data, and relevant publications is a key skill that an adult learner will need to learn and to use.

Adults enter the learning process focused on results. They need to know how the information will help them achieve their goals, whether personal or professional. Adult learners will be energized and motivated when they see how the content they are engaging with will help them reach their goals. This energy can be directed and used to drive the learning process, leading to better results.

Any adult learner who is looking for results in an education program that will fit their needs and schedule can call the SRAE office at 276-889-5424. Let the staff help you build your confidence and accomplish your educational goals by finding a class that works for you while providing the support and assistance you need.

FEMA awards $164,000 for Buchanan road repairs

By CHAD COOPER
coopkam@gmail.com

Buchanan County is set to receive nearly $164,000 in federal disaster assistance to help repair road infrastructure damaged during severe winter storms that impacted Southwest Virginia in early 2025.



The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) awarded $163,925 to support asphalt road surface repair and replacement projects in Buchanan County, according to an announcement on June 8 from U.S. Rep. Morgan Griffith's office.

The funding is part of two disaster-related grants awarded to the Commonwealth of Virginia totaling nearly $1.6 million.

In addition to the Buchanan County allocation, FEMA awarded $1,430,809 to support road restoration projects in neighboring Dickenson County.

Griffith said the funding follows efforts to secure federal disaster assistance after winter weather caused widespread transportation damage across the region.

"In early 2025, winter storms severely impacted transportation infrastructure in Southwest Virginia," Griffith said in a statement. "This extreme weather event inflicted damage to roads that our communities routinely rely on for access."

Griffith said he worked with federal officials to support Gov. Glenn Youngkin's request for a Major Disaster Declaration and to make additional federal resources available across Virginia's Ninth Congressional District.

"These FEMA grants for nearly $1.6 million show federal assistance is on the way to help Dickenson and Buchanan Counties rebuild road infrastructure in Southwest Virginia," Griffith said.

According to FEMA, the funds are obligated to the Commonwealth of Virginia, which will distribute the funding to local recipients responsible for carrying out the projects.

The grants stem from Virginia's Major Disaster Declaration approved by President Donald Trump in April 2025 following storm-related damage across portions of the state.

Griffith's office said the congressman worked alongside U.S. Sens. Tim Kaine and Mark Warner in support of the disaster declaration request.



GHS's Church and Belcher earn top honors in BDD Softball

By CHAD COOPER
coopkam@gmail.com

The Lady Wave of Grundy High School put an exclamation point on the final season of Black Diamond District softball, sweeping the league's top individual awards and placing seven players on the All-BDD First Team as selected by the district's coaches.

Senior third baseman Ryleigh Church was named the Black Diamond District Player of the Year for the second consecutive season, capping off a standout career in the district's final year of competition.

"Being named the BDD Player of the Year is something I'm incredibly proud of and grateful for," Church said. "To be one of the last players to receive this award in Grundy's history makes it even more special and meaningful to me. Growing up in this program and wearing Grundy across my chest for so many years has given me memories, friendships, and lessons that I'll carry with me forever. I just want to thank all my coaches and parents for helping me and supporting me along the way."

Senior pitcher Sophia Belcher earned Black Diamond District Pitcher of the Year honors for the third straight season.

"It means a lot to be named BDD Pitcher of the Year," Belcher said. "I couldn't have done it without my teammates, coaches, and family supporting me all season. I'm really grateful for the opportunity and proud of everything we accomplished together."

Grundy head coach Christina Bane and

SEE **CHURCH AND BELCHER | 2B**



CHAD COOPER | Virginia Mountaineer
Grundy High School senior third baseman Ryleigh Church (26) was selected Black Diamond District Softball Player of the Year for 2026.



CHAD COOPER | Virginia Mountaineer
Grundy High School senior pitcher Sophia (11) was selected Black Diamond District Softball Pitcher of the Year for 2026.



CHAD COOPER | Virginia Mountaineer
Grundy head softball coach Christana Bane was named Black Diamond District Coach of the Year for 2026.

Grundy baseball dominates final BDD honors

By CHAD COOPER
coopkam@gmail.com

Grundy High School capped off the final season of Black Diamond District baseball by dominating the district's postseason awards.

Leading the way for the Golden Wave was junior Ayden Whited, who was named the Black Diamond District Player of the Year after helping guide Grundy to another district title.

"Receiving BDD Player of the Year was a personal goal I set before the season, and was pumped to see it through," Whited said. "I made some adjustments hitting-wise leading up towards the season, and it really paid off. Thankful to Jordan Hardin and everything he's done for me and the program."

Freshman standout Jaccob Smeltzer earned Pitcher of the Year honors after emerging as the Wave's ace during his first varsity campaign.

"Winning Pitcher of the Year means a lot to me," Smeltzer said. "My older brother was an All-District pitcher, and I've always wanted to follow in his footsteps. Growing up in a baseball family and spending so much of my life around the field, I always dreamed of being a pitcher, but I never had the opportunity until this year. I'm thankful for my coaches and teammates who believed in me and helped make this award possible."



CHAD COOPER | Virginia Mountaineer
Grundy High School junior Ayden Whited was selected as the Black Diamond District Softball Player of the Year for 2026.



CHAD COOPER | Virginia Mountaineer
Grundy High School freshman pitcher Jaccob Smeltzer (35) was selected Black Diamond District Baseball Pitcher of the Year for 2026.

Grundy's success was also recognized in the coaching ranks, as head coach Jordan Hardin and the Golden Wave coaching staff were selected as the Black Diamond District Coach and Coaching Staff of the Year.

The Golden Wave placed seven players on the first team and four more on the second team.

Smeltzer earned first-team honors at two positions, pitcher and catcher, while Whited was also a multiple first-team selection as a pitcher and outfielder. Other first-team picks for Grundy included junior Blake Childress at first base, senior Brody Ford at second base, sophomore Gavin Mays in the outfield and junior Mason Boyd in the outfield.

Twin Valley was represented on the first team by freshman pitcher Eli Dye, freshman Harvey Cooper/Duty at third base and senior Brannon Mullins at shortstop, while Council senior Jacob Ray also earned first-team recognition as a designated hitter.

The second team featured Council's Jacob Ray as a pitcher, freshman Gunnar Deel as a pitcher and sophomore Ben Stevens at catcher. Twin Valley's Mullins earned second-team honors as a pitcher, while sophomores Josh Keller (first base), Michael Motes (second base) and Titus Ashby (outfield) were also selected.

Grundy's second-team honorees included senior Graham Pittman at third base, senior Logan Mullins at shortstop, sophomore Blake Payne in the outfield and junior Henry Brown as a designated hitter.

The selections mark the final all-district baseball team in Black Diamond District history, as the district concluded following the 2025-26 school year with member schools consolidating into Southern Gap High School.

SEE **GRUNDY BASEBALL | 2B**



CHAD COOPER | Virginia Mountaineer
Grundy head baseball coach Jordan Hardin was named Black Diamond District Coach of the Year for 2026.

In the Locker Room

By CHAD COOPER
coopkam@gmail.com

The Eagles are landing.

Even though Southern Gap High School will not officially open its doors for a few more months, its student-athletes are already building the foundation for what they hope will become a proud tradition.



IN THE LOCKER ROOM

The Southern Gap football team has spent the early offseason competing in 7-on-7 events and putting in the work during offseason conditioning. The boys' and girls' basketball teams have attended summer camps, while the volleyball program recently hosted a clinic for prospective players. Girls' tennis coach Eddie Smith and competition cheer coach Megan Wolford have used social media to reach interested students, and tryouts for both the football and basketball seasons have already been held.

In many ways, Southern Gap athletics is no longer a concept. It is becoming a reality.

Nothing has driven that point home more than seeing the new artificial turf being installed at the football stadium. The black end zones, accented by Vegas gold lettering and borders, are beginning to transform the facility into something Buchanan County residents have only imagined for years.

As a former football player, I can only imagine what is going through the minds of athletes spending their summer afternoons working in the heat and humidity. Every sprint, every lift and every conditioning session brings them one step closer to making history when the Eagles take the field for the first time. I am getting pumped to see head coach Greg Tester lead the Eagles onto that field for the first time while I watch from the Lloyd Combs press box. Lloyd was a mentor to me when I first started writing for the newspaper, and I will never forget those road trips we took together and the time we spent just talking about sports and life.

Like many sports fans across the country, I am counting down the days until that opening kickoff.

As excited as I am about the future, I would be lying if I said there is not some nostalgia mixed in with that excitement.

For years, Friday nights meant packed stands at Nelson Memorial Field, The Cliff, where I played and at Twin Valley, which is just a stone's throw away from my home. Those venues provided countless memories for athletes, coaches, families, fans and especially me. I have been fortunate enough to grow up in a family of diehard sports fans and, through my job, to cover thrilling victories, heartbreaking defeats, championship runs and unforgettable individual performances.

Before becoming a reporter, you could not have paid

SEE **LOCKER ROOM | 2B**

GWC Camp draws young grapplers for four days of high-level instruction

By CHAD COOPER
coopkam@gmail.com

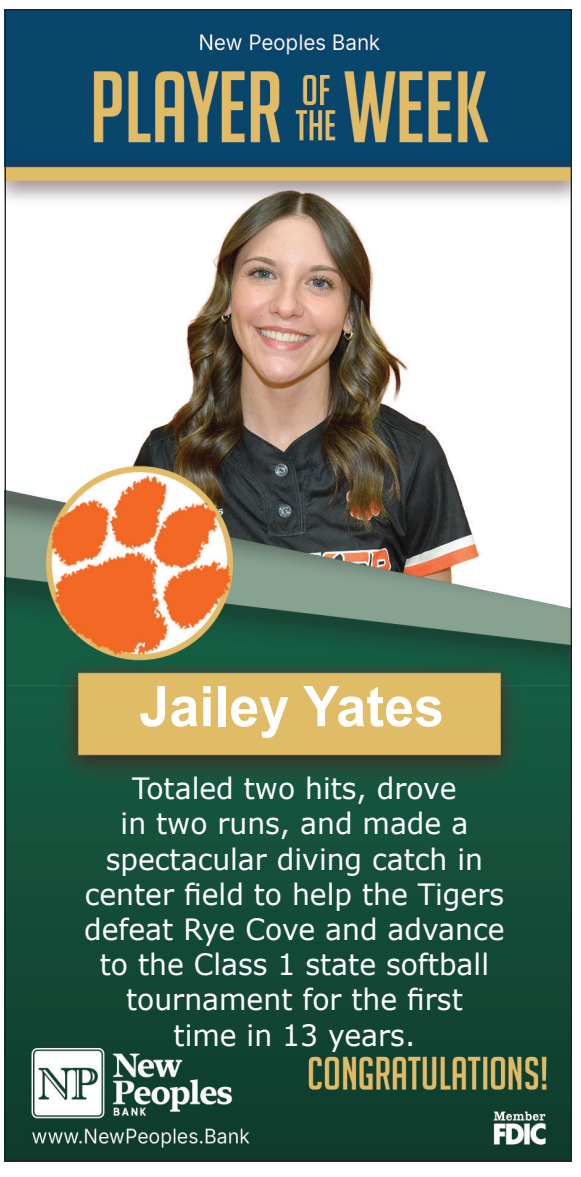
Wrestlers from across the region gathered at Grundy High School June 15-18 for the annual Grundy Wrestling Club Summer Wrestling Camp, a four-day event that brought nationally recognized instructors and collegiate standouts to Buchanan County.

The GWC camp has grown into one of the premier youth wrestling camps in the region, attracting wrestlers of all ages and skill levels while providing high-level instruction free of charge.

Leading the list of camp clinicians was Chris Marshall,



Contributed photo
Five-time NCAA champion and former Carter Starocci standout Carter Starocci addresses a group of young wrestlers during the 2025 Grundy Wrestling Club Camp at Grundy High School. Starocci shared advice and instruction with campers as part of the club's annual summer training event.



Southern Gap High football stadium taking shape

By CHAD COOPER
coopkam@gmail.com

The Southern Gap High School football team's home is rapidly evolving from a construction zone into one of Southwest Virginia's newest sports venues.

One of the most noticeable recent developments is the installation of the stadium's artificial turf playing surface a couple of weeks ago. The field features black end zones with Eagles written in Vegas gold, while a Vegas gold border surrounds the playing surface, giving the facility a distinctive look that reflects the school's colors and identity.

The large video scoreboard has been installed and now looms over the fieldhouse at the far end of the field. Bleachers have also been placed on both the home and visitor sides, along with a massive press box on the home side.

School officials expect the stadium to be completed in time for Southern Gap's first-ever home appearance when the Eagles host Patrick Henry in a preseason scrimmage on Aug. 15.

One week later, history will officially be made when Southern Gap welcomes Holston High School on Aug. 21 for the first regular-season football game in school history.

The Eagles' inaugural home schedule features several marquee matchups. Southern Gap will host Ridgeview on Aug. 28 in the first Black Diamond Miners Bowl, a rivalry game between two schools representing Virginia's coalfield communities.

Former Black Diamond District rival Honaker will visit Southern Gap on Sept. 25 for Little League Night, while neighboring Richlands travels down Shortt Gap to Buchanan County on Oct. 2 for Senior Night.

Homecoming festivities are scheduled for Oct. 23 when the Eagles host River View, W.Va.

Southern Gap's first away game will come Sept. 4 at Rye Cove. Additional road contests include trips to Giles on Sept. 11 and Tazewell on Oct. 9.

The final two games of the inaugural season will take place away from home as Southern Gap travels to Eastside on Oct. 30 before closing the regular season Nov. 6 at Wise Central.

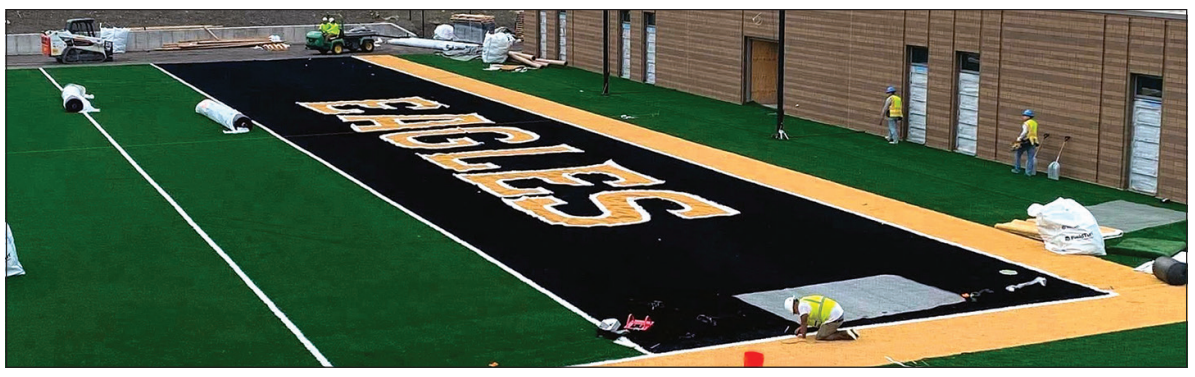


Photo courtesy of Southern Gap Athletics

The Southern Gap Eagles' identity is beginning to take shape as work continues on the new football stadium. The black end zone, highlighted by "EAGLES" lettering and Vegas gold accents, is among the latest additions to the facility ahead of the school's inaugural football season this fall.

GRUNDY BASEBALL

FROM PAGE 1B

2026 All-Black Diamond District Awards
Player of the Year: Ayden Whited, Jr., Grundy
Pitcher of the Year: Jaccob Smeltzer, Fr., Grundy
Coach and Coaching Staff of the Year: Jordan Hardin and staff, Grundy

2026 All Black Diamond District Baseball 1st Team
Pitcher - Jaccob Smeltzer, Grundy, Fr.
Pitcher - Eli Dye, Twin Valley, Fr.
Pitcher - Ayden Whited, Grundy, Jr.
Catcher - Jaccob Smeltzer, Grundy, Fr.
First base - Blake Childress, Grundy, Jr.
Second base - Brody Ford, Grundy, Sr.
Third base - Harvey Cooper/Duty, Twin Valley, Fr.
Shortstop - Brannon Mullins, Twin Valley, Sr.
Outfield - Ayden Whited, Grundy, Jr.
Outfield - Gavin Mays, Grundy, So.
Outfield - Mason Boyd, Grundy, Jr.
Designated Hitter - Jacob Ray, Council, Sr.

2026 All-Black Diamond District Baseball Second Team
Pitcher - Jacob Ray, Council, Sr.
Pitcher - Brannon Mullins, Twin Valley, Sr.
Pitcher - Gunnar Deel, Council, Fr.
Catcher - Ben Stevens, Council, So.
First base - Josh Keller, Twin Valley, So.
Second base - Michael Motes, Twin Valley, So.
Third base - Graham Pittman, Grundy, Sr.
Shortstop - Logan Mullins, Grundy, Sr.
Outfield - Titus Ashby, Twin Valley, So.
Outfield - Gunnar Deel, Council, Fr.
Outfield - Blake Payne, Grundy, So.
Designated Hitter - Henry Brown, Grundy, Jr.

GWC CAMP

FROM PAGE 1B

a two-time NCAA Division I All-American and one of the nation's most respected youth wrestling instructors. Marshall was joined by former Grundy standout Wyatt Bush, a four-time VHSL state champion, two-time All-American and current wrestler at NCAA Division I Bloomsburg University.

This year's camp instructors include veteran clinician Ethan Smith, a former two-time collegiate All-American at Ohio State. Also present are Carson Griffey, a three-time VHSL state champion from Grundy now competing at Reinhardt University, and Bryce Looney, a former Grundy state champion and member of the University of Pikeville men's wrestling team.

Throughout the week, the instructors work with campers on wrestling fundamentals, technique, positioning, live drilling and match strategy, while sharing lessons learned from their own wrestling careers.

Daily sessions were divided by age group, with pre-kindergarten through second-grade wrestlers training in the morning, third- through fifth-grade wrestlers participating during the late morning, and middle school and high school wrestlers attending afternoon sessions.

The camp provided young wrestlers with an opportunity to sharpen their skills during the offseason while learning from collegiate athletes. Participants received instruction in takedowns, escapes, riding techniques and mat awareness while also emphasizing discipline, work ethic and sportsmanship.

Organizers said the camp was designed to give local athletes access to elite instruction at no cost, allowing wrestlers from throughout Southwest Virginia to improve their skills and gain valuable experience before returning to competition later this year.

The camp will conclude on June 18 with a pig roast and alumni gathering at Poplar Gap Park. The event will begin at 6:30 p.m. and will be open to all Grundy Wrestling Club alumni and anyone who has contributed to the program's success over the years, including former athletes, parents, coaches and supporters. Organizers encouraged attendees to reconnect, share memories and celebrate the tradition and legacy of Grundy wrestling.

CHURCH AND BELCHER

FROM PAGE 1B

her staff were selected as the Black Diamond District Coach and Coaching Staff of the Year after guiding the Lady Wave to a perfect record in BDD play.

The Lady Wave dominated the first team selections, earning seven spots. Belcher and sophomore Savannah Childress were both honored as pitchers, while Childress also earned recognition at first base. Senior Jade Vencill was selected at second base, Church was chosen at third base, junior Leah Rasnake earned honors at shortstop and junior Ava Ward was named to the outfield.

Council High School placed three players on the first team. Senior pitcher Candace Runyon earned first-team honors in the circle, freshman Zoey McGlothlin was selected in the outfield, and senior Ava Rose was recognized as the district's designated player.

Hurley High School also had a strong showing with four first-team selections. Sophomore Kesha Hagerman was named as a catcher, sophomore Brooklyn Owens earned an outfield spot and junior Emily Mullins was selected as a utility player.

Grundy was also well represented on the second team, led by senior catcher Isabella Looney. Sophomores Maddie Matney and Nevaeh Keene each earned second-team outfield honors.

Hurley landed seven players on the second team. Freshman Jaida Hardin and sophomores Jayla Dotson and Brooklyn Owens were recognized as pitchers. Senior Christina Wolford earned honors at second base; senior Haley Hurley was selected at shortstop; sophomore Jayln Dotson was named to the outfield; and junior Jayda Stacy was chosen as the district's second-team designated player.

Council added three more selections to the second team. Sophomore Baylee Bostic was honored at first base, junior Megan Hess earned recognition at third base and senior Kayla Johnson was selected as the district's second-team utility player.

2026 All-Black Diamond District Softball Awards
Player of the Year: Ryleigh Church, Sr., Grundy
Pitcher of the Year: Sophia Belcher, Sr., Grundy
Coach and Coaching Staff of the Year: Christina Bane and staff, Grundy

2026 All-Black Diamond District Softball First Team
Pitcher - Sophia Belcher, Grundy, Sr.
Pitcher - Candace Runyon, Council, Sr.
Pitcher - Savannah Childress, Grundy, So.
Catcher - Kesha Hagerman, Hurley, So.
First Base - Savannah Childress, Grundy, So.
Second Base - Jade Vencill, Grundy, Sr.
Third Base - Ryleigh Church, Grundy, Sr.
Shortstop - Leah Rasnake, Grundy, Jr.
Outfield - Zoey McGlothlin, Council, Fr.
Outfield - Brooklyn Owens, Hurley, So.
Outfield - Ava Ward, Grundy, Jr.
Designated Player - Ava Rose, Council, Sr.
Utility - Emily Mullins, Hurley, Jr.

2026 All-Black Diamond District Softball Second Team
Pitcher - Jaida Hardin, Hurley, Fr.
Pitcher - Jayla Dotson, Hurley, So.
Pitcher - Brooklyn Owens, Hurley, So.
Catcher - Isabella Looney, Grundy, Sr.
First Base - Baylee Bostic, Council, So.
Second Base - Christina Wolford, Hurley, Sr.
Third Base - Megan Hess, Council, Jr.
Shortstop - Haley Hurley, Hurley, Sr.
Outfield - Maddie Matney, Grundy, So.
Outfield - Jayln Dotson, Hurley, So.
Outfield - Nevaeh Keene, Grundy, Fr.
Designated Player - Jayda Stacy, Hurley, Jr.
Utility - Kayla Johnson, Council, Sr.

SOUTHERN GAP EAGLES

Southern Gap softball clinic set for June 18 at Poplar Gap

By CHAD COOPER
coopkam@gmail.com

Student-athletes interested in playing softball at Southern Gap High School will have an opportunity to meet the program's coaching staff and sharpen their skills during a softball clinic scheduled for Thursday, June 18.

The clinic will be held from 9:30 a.m. to noon at the Poplar Gap Park Athletic Fields on Southern Gap and is open to potential junior varsity and varsity softball players who plan to attend Southern Gap High School.

According to Southern Gap Softball head coach Christina Bane, the clinic is designed to introduce athletes to the SGHS coaching staff and to provide instruction and skill development across various aspects of the game. Participants will have the chance to work on fundamentals and learn more about the expectations of the new softball program as Southern Gap prepares for its inaugural season.

Southern Gap High School will open this fall following the consolidation of Council, Grundy, Hurley and Twin Valley High Schools.

Athletes interested in attending the clinic or seeking additional information are encouraged to contact head coach Christina Bane at christina.bane@bcpsk12.com.

The clinic is one of several opportunities being offered this summer as Southern Gap coaches begin building relationships with student-athletes ahead of the school's first year of competition.

IN THE LOCKER ROOM

FROM PAGE 1B

me to watch a track meet or attend a cross-country meet. Honestly, I had no clue because those are sports that I did not compete in, but after watching state-caliber athletes such as Caleb Elswick, Jessi Looney, Landon Johnson and Keyston Hartford from Grundy, Kim Lester from Twin Valley, Landon Adkins and Ariel and Arianna Endicott from Hurley and Ella Rasnake from Council, to name a few, changed my whole outlook on those sports. I also want to give Loni Webb and Christina Bane a huge shoutout for the time and effort they have put into bringing track to the forefront in Buchanan County.

I have also witnessed the growth of sports that often do not receive the same spotlight as football and basketball in our county. Volleyball, tennis and golf have steadily improved. Our cheerleading programs have become more competitive, and baseball and softball are beginning to benefit from a revitalized Little League program.

With all of Buchanan County's students now under one roof, those programs have an opportunity to reach even greater heights.

There is no denying that what is being built atop the mountain is impressive. When completed, Southern Gap High School will provide student-athletes with facilities that rival many of the best in Virginia. The football stadium, field house, athletic facilities and academic spaces represent a significant investment in the future of Buchanan County's children.

At the same time, it is important to acknowledge the sacrifices that come with such a transition.

My heart goes out to the students and families who will face long daily commutes from the far reaches of the county. It was also difficult to watch Grundy, Hurley, Twin Valley, and Council close the chapters on schools that had served as the heart of their communities for generations. Those buildings were more than schools. They were gathering places where lifelong memories were made and community pride was forged.

Change is never easy, especially when it involves institutions that have been woven into the fabric of our communities for decades.

Yet there is also an opportunity in change.

For the first time, students from all parts of Buchanan County will learn, compete, and grow together daily. Friendships will develop among young people who might never have met otherwise, unless they attend the Buchanan County Career, Technology, and Higher Learning Center. New traditions will be created, rivalries will form, and heroes will be celebrated. Will we see the school's first 1,000-yard rusher this season? Who will be the first to score 1,000 points, or hit the first home run? Many exciting firsts await us to celebrate together.

The other day, I found myself reflecting on how Buchanan County has developed over the past 150 years. Historically, communities focused on strengthening their own towns and neighborhoods, hoping growth would eventually spread beyond their borders. With the development of Southern Gap, county leaders have taken a different approach. They have established a central point for growth and investment, with the hope that success will radiate outward into every community across Buchanan County.

That remains to be seen, of course.

But as the turf is rolled out, the finishing touches are placed on the field house, and the first Eagles teams prepare for competition, one thing is certain:

A new era of Buchanan County athletics is about to begin.

And whether you're excited, nostalgic or a little bit of both, it's hard not to feel that something special is taking shape on the mountain.

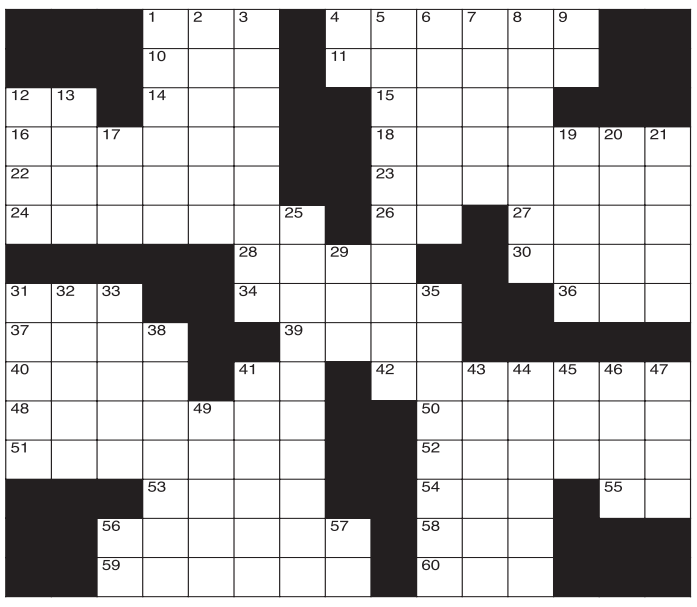
FLOWER FRIENDS WORD SEARCH

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

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

WORDS

ANTENNAE
APIARY
BEETLE
BLOSSOM
BUMBLEBEE
BUTTERFLY
CHRYSALIS
COLONY
DRONE
ECOSYSTEM
FLIGHT
FORAGING
HABITAT
HOVERFLY
HUMMINGBIRD
LARVA
MANDIBLES
MIGRATORY
NECTAR
OVARY
PETAL
POLLEN
PROBOSCIS
STAMEN



CLUES ACROSS

1. Similar
4. Have an ambitious plan or a lofty goal
10. No (Scottish)
11. __ Aires, city
12. Morning
14. Senior's son (abbr.)
15. A notable achievement
16. European nation
18. Endings
22. Puts into place
23. Former
24. Grenadier
26. Sea patrol
27. Algerian port
28. Norwegian river
30. Precipitation
31. Sunscreen rating
34. New York is one
36. Patti Hearst's captors
37. Soft mineral with greasy feel
39. Retired Brazilian footballer
40. An Indian nursemaid
41. Atomic #24
42. Immobile
48. Insignia of royalty
50. Seeds from which chocolate is made
51. Begin again
52. Round root
53. Beginning to end (alt. sp.)
54. What newlyweds just said
55. Empire State
56. Give back
58. College hoops tournament
59. Unstable situations
60. Young women's association

CLUES DOWN

1. Administer a drug
2. Holy places
3. Contrary opinions
4. Blood type
5. Gags
6. Micturating
7. Silly
8. A type of "cuff"
9. Spanish be
12. Austrian river
13. Messenger ribonucleic acid
17. Consume food
19. California supermarket
20. Electronic communication
21. Cassia tree
25. Written works
29. Cool!
31. Noteworthy 90s lawyer Kenneth
32. One who was compensated
33. National symbols
35. Raising
38. A type of talk
41. Cloud
43. Middle Eastern peoples
44. Pouches
45. 007's creator
46. A cut of meat
47. Sports entertainment award
49. Christine __, actress
56. Relief organization (abbr.)
57. Canadian province (abbr.)

SUDOKU

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

Level: Intermediate

WORD SCRAMBLE

Rearrange the letters to spell something pertaining to the pollinators.

E S E B

Answer: bees

GUESS WHO?

I am an actor born in South Korea on June 16, 1972. I first rose to fame in a film franchise opposite Kal Penn. I also portrayed a character in the reboot of the "Star Trek" franchise. I made history as the first Asian American actor to star in a mainstream Hollywood thriller.

Answer: John Cho

CRYPTO FUN

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

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

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

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

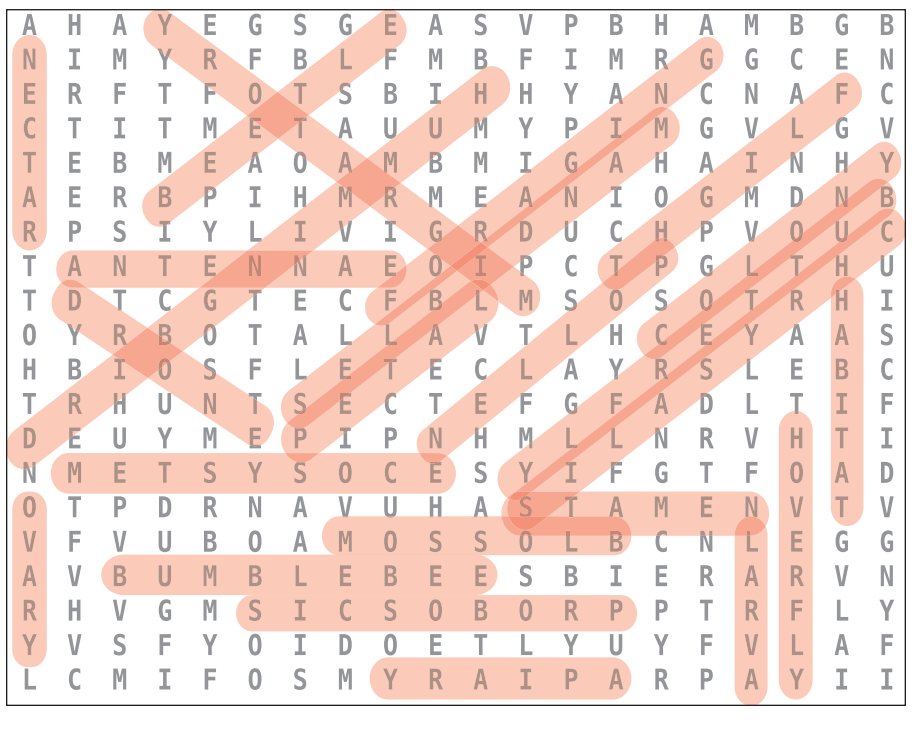
C. 22 19 26 25 7 23
Clue: Getting bigger

D. 24 4 26 26 5 8
Clue: Flowering

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

PUZZLE SOLUTION

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



SUDOKU SOLUTION

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

Horoscopes

ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20
Management opportunities are coming your way, Aries. It is time to step up and take the lead. Your confidence has long been a strong character trait, so push forward.

TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21
Taurus, patience will pay off big time when a long-awaited piece of news finally arrives. The weekend is a perfect time for walking in nature or tending to the garden.

GEMINI – May 22/Jun 21
Your curiosity is leading you down a fascinating path right now, Gemini. This could spark a new interest. Stay flexible, as a last-minute change of plans might be in the cards.

CANCER – Jun 22/Jul 22
Cancer, emotional clarity might help you address a minor concern with grace and ease. You often project a gentle strength that helps to draw people closer to you.

LEO – Jul 23/Aug 23
It's time for your inner child to come out to play, Leo. Say yes to a game night or a creative pursuit. Joy will be the primary focus this week, leading you to have more fun.

VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22
Virgo, a breakthrough in your wellness routine may be on the horizon, leaving you feeling energized and refreshed. People might notice the glow and ask for your secret.

LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23
Libra, artistic inspiration might just be everywhere you look this week. Whether gazing at the clouds or the buildings around you, you might be inspired to create something.

SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22
Transformation is in the air, Scorpio. You might be shedding an old habit for a better one. You may be stepping into a more powerful version of yourself soon enough.

SAGITTARIUS – Nov 23/Dec 21
Sagittarius, it's time to share your knowledge with others, which can bring you a sense of fulfillment that you might not have seen coming.

CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20
Career goals are moving forward at a steady, satisfying pace, Capricorn. Keep your eyes on the future and trust the process. You're doing amazing work.

AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Feb 18
Social activism or community work may give you a sense of purpose that is much-needed right now, Aquarius. Your ability to think creatively will help immensely.

PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20
Your kindness this week will create a ripple of positivity that flows right back to you, Pisces. Reach out to a friend in need when you have a moment.

FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

JUNE 14
Lucy Hale, Actress (37)

JUNE 15
Ice Cube, Rapper (57)

JUNE 16
Camila Morrone, Model (29)

JUNE 17
Kendrick Lamar, Rapper (39)

JUNE 18
Blake Shelton, Singer (50)

JUNE 19
Atticus Shaffer, Actor (28)

JUNE 20
Nicole Kidman, Actress (59)

$2.05M BUDGET

FROM PAGE 1B

during the coming fiscal year. Bank stock tax revenue is projected at $550,000, while food tax collections are expected to generate $450,000. Real estate taxes are estimated at $160,000, and lodging tax revenue is projected at $110,000.

Additional revenue projections include $100,000 in business license revenue, $100,000 in donations and $95,000 in sales tax revenue. The budget also anticipates $82,000 in garbage fees, $75,000 in interest income, $60,000 each from CAM income and personal property tax collections, and $32,417 from a law enforcement grant.

Other anticipated revenue sources include county fire protection funding, DMV and fire program grants, utility and communications taxes, fuel tax refunds, festival revenue, Virginia Department of Transportation snow removal reimbursement and various fees and reimbursements.

The budget will take effect at the start of the town's new fiscal year on July 1.

BOS APPROVES

FROM PAGE 1B

Dec. 15, 2026. However, supervisors approved the funding as a one-time payment to assist the authority with current cash flow needs.

The motion passed by a 5-0-2 vote. Hurricane District Supervisor and Board Chairman Tim Hess and Prater District Supervisor David Rose abstained because they are employed by the PSA.

During discussion, South Grundy Supervisor Roger Rife asked what the problem was with the authority's cash flow.

Hess, who also serves as PSA executive director, explained that the authority is currently involved in a sewer project along the Levisa River being completed by Hill Construction.

“Right now they are having some contract work done by Hill Construction and had a bill for $1 million that needed to be paid,” Hess said.

Hess said the project is being reimbursed through the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, but reimbursement funds have not yet been received.

He explained that there is currently not enough cash flow available to pay the invoice and that the project may be completed before DEQ reimbursement funds are received.

Adkins stressed that the authority was not seeking any additional county funding.

“There not asking for any additional funding,” Adkins told Rife.

2026-27 BUDGET

FROM PAGE 1B

Comprehensive Services Act programs, $8.1 million for public schools, $8.06 million for law enforcement, $7.09 million for public works and $3.94 million for environmental management.

Revenue for the General County Fund is expected to come primarily from property taxes, which are projected to generate $21.77 million, and other local taxes totaling $10.89 million. The budget also includes $7.21 million in anticipated surplus funds.

Outside the General County Fund, the county's largest special funds include $50 million for school construction projects, $41.77 million for the School Fund, $12.49 million for the Department of Social Services and $11.48 million for the Coal Road Fund.

The budget also provides funding for emergency communications through the E-911 Fund, flood recovery and disaster assistance programs, opioid settlement initiatives, public safety grants, economic development projects and various school-related programs.

County officials noted that the budget is balanced, with total expenditures matching projected revenues at $197,711,279.

The fiscal year 2026-27 budget will take effect July 1.

In other business, Adkins moved to approve Buchanan County Head Start's submission of a Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) in the amount of $11,335 as an additional appropriation. Dotson seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously by the board.

In other business, following a recommendation by Buchanan County Administrator Craig Horn, the board voted unanimously to donate $1 per bag for garbage picked up in the county to a nonprofit organization.

“This one we have been doing; we just couldn’t find the original motion,” Horn explained. “We wanted you all to reaffirm to continue to do this. There is only one group right now doing it, the Friends of the Library. Cooper then moved to approve Horn’s request, which was seconded by Stiltner and unanimously approved by the board.

2% BONUS

FROM PAGE 1B

funding made available by the Commonwealth.

In other business, the board of supervisors unanimously approved a one-time 2% bonus for employees of the Buchanan County Department of Social Services during the meeting.

The action followed a request from Buchanan County Department of Social Services Executive Director Marcella Watson, who informed county officials that the Commonwealth of Virginia had allocated funding for the bonus as part of the governor's compensation initiative for state-supported local employees.

In a letter submitted to County Administrator Horn prior to the meeting, Watson said the state had provided $60,477 toward the bonus while the required local contribution would be $9,415.79.

Watson noted that if the request was not approved, the state funding would have to be returned.

"The Commonwealth of Virginia has allocated $60,477 to fund the state's portion of this bonus," Watson wrote. "The required local contribution is $9,415.79. If this request is not approved, the state funds must be returned in accordance with state requirements."

Watson also stated that the Virginia Department of Social Services requires a copy of the adopted local ordinance authorizing the bonus pursuant to Virginia law.

Dotson made the motion to approve the bonus, and Adkins seconded the motion.

The measure passed unanimously.

FAMILY FUN DAY

FROM PAGE 3B

porters included Mutter Insurance, New Peoples Bank and Virginia Eyecare.

Additional thanks were extended to The Beat Music Services, the Town of Grundy Police Department, the Buchanan County Sheriff's Office, Poplar Gap Park staff, Soirée, volunteers, food truck operators, vendors, nonprofits, exhibitors and community organizations that participated in the event.

"The Buchanan County Chamber of Commerce is grateful to everyone who attended and helped make Family Fun Day a memorable celebration for families throughout Buchanan County and the surrounding region," Shafer said.

Chamber officials said the strong turnout, community spirit and enthusiastic support demonstrated what makes Buchanan County special and helped make Family Fun Day & Drone Show 2026 one of the organization's most memorable community celebrations to date.



Contributed photo

A patriotic “USA” formation shines above Poplar Gap Park during the drone show finale of Family Fun Day on June 7. Hundreds of spectators gathered to watch the aerial display that capped off the day-long community celebration.

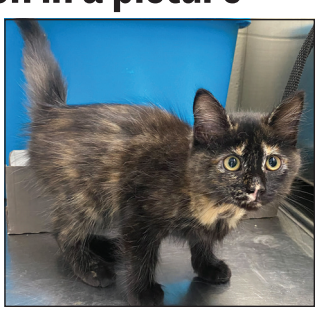


Photo by Lowe's Drone Service

An aerial view shows Family Fun Day in full swing at Poplar Gap Park on June 7. The community celebration drew hundreds of families from across Buchanan County and the surrounding region for an afternoon and evening of activities and entertainment.

ADOPT A PET

Purrfection in a picture





This purrfect pet is a twelve-week-old female. Her soft coat is tortoiseshell in color. She has vibrant yellow/orange eyes and spectacular markings. Her temperament is gentle and social. She loves playing and attention. Her kennel at the shelter is shared with one sweet brother.

These purring-for-a-partner pets will be available for adoption at the Buchanan County Animal Shelter until Monday, June 22, 2026. The animal shelter is located at 1191 Dogpound Road. For more information about these animals, please call the shelter at (276) 935-4067.

Also available for adoption is this five-month-old male kitten. His silky coat is colored grey and white. He has bright green eyes and a sweet pink nose. His temperament is calm and pleasant. He shares his kennel at the shelter with two cute sisters. The animal shelter is located at 1191 Dogpound Road. For more information about these animals, please call the shelter at (276) 935-4067.

Notice or Advertisement

The Buchanan County School Board is accepting proposals for the following contracted services:

Hearing Impaired Services
Occupational Therapy Services
Physical Therapy Services
School Psychologist Services
Counseling Services

Proposals Due: June 19, 2026 at 8:00 a.m.

Please submit proposals for the 2026-2027 school year to Tabby Cline at the School Board Office located at 4447 Slate Creek Road, Suite 100, Grundy, VA 24614.

Buchanan County Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups.

The Buchanan County Public School System is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

VANSANT MCDONALDS

FROM PAGE 1B

grand opening celebration that drew thousands of visitors eager to sample their first Buchanan County Big Macs.

The opening ceremony featured a ribbon-cutting attended by local officials, business leaders and restaurant representatives. Among those participating were then-Grundy Mayor John Fleenor, Buchanan County Chamber of Commerce President Geraldine Shortridge, owner-operators Gene and Patty Forbes, Vansant Store Manager Kenny Perry and Store Supervisor Betty Street.

Boy Scouts from Troop 746 conducted a flag-raising ceremony, while the Grundy Senior High School Band performed the National Anthem and other selections for the large crowd gathered for the occasion.

No official reopening date has been announced, but company representatives have indicated the new restaurant is expected to welcome customers back in mid-September.

Executive Director Position Available

The Buchanan County Chamber of Commerce is seeking an executive director to serve as a key representative and advocate for business owners and employers in the community. His or her key role will be to promote and strengthen the business community.

The successful candidate must:

* Be a resident of Buchanan County, Va., or be willing to relocate upon hire;
* Bachelor’s degree or an equivalent combination of education;
* Be a Self-Starter;
* Be outgoing and willing to take on existing and new projects;
* Fundraising experience is a plus;
* Possesses strong organizational skills;
* Be able to get along with a wide variety of people from all walks of life;
* Be able to communicate effectively when speaking or writing;
* Be proficient in Word and Excel; and
* Knowledge of Canva or similar graphic programs.

The executive director serves as “the face” of the chamber of commerce and of the business community in Buchanan County, organizing and promoting a wide range of services and events for members.

Serious inquiries only. Salary and hours may be negotiated. Some travel is required, and all travel must be pre-approved by the chamber board of directors. Expenses are reimbursable.

Email resume, references and salary requirements to:
director@bcchamber.net

Mark in the subject line “Chamber of Commerce Director Application.”

Deadline to Apply: July 1, 2026

VDOT announces traffic alerts for Buchanan County

By CHAD COOPER
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The Virginia Department of Transportation released traffic alerts for Buchanan and the surrounding counties.

To keep motorists informed, VDOT provides weekly updates on highway construction and maintenance projects throughout Southwest Virginia.

The following are current VDOT projects in Buchanan, Dickenson and Tazewell Counties that may cause traffic delays from June 15 through June 21, 2026:

Buchanan County

Route 460/121 Poplar Creek Phase B: Be alert to a new traffic pattern on Route 460 at Grundy due to the construction of Route 460/121 Poplar Creek Phase B. The switch is approximately 1.1 miles west of the Route 460/Route 83 (Riverside Drive/Edgewater Drive) intersection in Grundy. Motorists should be alert to flaggers in the area. (Completion: Late 2027)

Dickenson County

Route 83 roundabout at Route 637: Construction continues for a roundabout and a new park-and-ride lot at the intersection of Route 83 and Route 637 in Dickenson County. Be alert to lane shifts and closures. Pay attention to flaggers, signs, and message boards in the area. (Completion: October 2026)

Route 619 (Skeetrock Road) bridge repairs: Repairs are underway on the Route 619 (Skeetrock Road) bridge over Pound River in Dickenson County, between Routes 607 and 695. The project includes using temporary traffic signals to control one-way traffic. Pay close attention to temporary construction signs. (Completion: June 2026)

Russell County

Route 600 (Ivy Ridge Road) bridge replacement: A portion of Route 600 (Ivy Ridge Road) is closed due to a bridge replacement project in Russell County. The closure is located 0.6 miles north of the intersection of Route 600 and Route 664 (Carbo Road) and 1.3 miles south of the intersection of Route 600 and Route 725 (Egg Farm Road). A detour is available using Routes 600, 664, 616, and 615. Be alert to signs and message boards. (Completion: July 2026)

Route 19 safety improvements: Safety improvements are underway on Route 19 northbound in the Rosedale area of Russell County. Lane closures will be in place starting 0.8 miles west of Route 80. The right lane is restricted to a width of 11 feet. Watch for signs and message boards. (Completion: November 2026)

Tazewell County

Route 19/460 and Route 610 intersection improvements: An intersection improvement project is underway on Route 19/460, from the intersection of Route 19 with Route 460 at Adair Drive, to the intersection of Route 19/460 with Route 610 in the Claypool Hill area of Tazewell County. Anticipate shoulder and lane closures in the area. (Completion: December 2026)

Several interstate projects are also going on during this time on Interstate 81 and Interstate 77, including the following:

Interstate 81 – Exit 50 and mile marker 52 bridge rehabilitations (Smyth County): A project that includes bridge rehabilitation work on six bridges north and southbound at exit 50 and mile marker 52 in Smyth County is coming soon. Be alert to construction crews mobilizing in the area. Nighttime lane closures will be in place for the duration of the project. Also, Be alert to flaggers and/or lane closures on Kiawana Road and Nick's Creek Road. Pay attention to signs and message boards. (Completion: November 2027)

Interstate 81 – Exit 45 deceleration lane extension (Smyth County): A project to extend the deceleration lane at exit 45 northbound in the Marion area of Smyth County is underway. The project includes replacing the northbound I-81 bridge over Matson Drive. Be alert to periodic nighttime lane closures and shifted traffic over Matson Drive. (Completion: December 2027)

Interstate 81 – Bridge rehabilitation at mile marker 68 (Wythe County): Due to a bridge rehabilitation project on I-81 north and southbound over Reed Creek at mile marker 68 in Wythe County, be alert to periodic extended lane closures and a width restriction of 14 feet. Pay attention to signs and message boards. (Completion: September 2027)

Interstate 81 – Roadway improvements (Wythe County): A project is underway to construct an auxiliary lane southbound between exits 73 and 72. Be alert to periodic lane closures in this area. (Completion: Fall 2026)

Interstate 81/77 interchange at Wytheville: Due to improvements on I-81 and I-77 at the interchange at Wytheville, pay close attention to signs and message boards. Be alert to possible lane restrictions and traffic shifts due to drainage work. (Completion: Summer 2027)

Interstates 81 and 77 maintenance activities — be alert to the following lane closures:

Interstate 81

Nighttime bridge deck repairs northbound Monday – Thursday between exit 67 and mile marker 69 in Wythe County.

Nighttime paving operations north and southbound between mile marker 23 and Exit 24 in Washington County.

A super load will be traveling northbound from Bristol to the West Virginia state line, June 15 – 20.

A super load will be traveling southbound from the West Virginia state line to Bristol, June 15 – 20.

Interstate 77

Nighttime bridge deck repairs northbound near mile markers 51, 65, and 45 in Wythe and Bland counties.

A super load will be traveling southbound from exit 32 to near mile marker 5 in Wythe and Carroll counties.



Buchanan County YMCA to Host Family Swim Night June 18

By CHAD COOPER
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Families looking for a fun way to cool off this summer are invited to attend Family Swim Night at the Buchanan County YMCA on Wednesday, June 18.

The event will be held from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Buchanan County YMCA, located at 1059 Golden Wave Drive in Grundy.

YMCA members will be admitted free of charge. Admission for non-members is $5 for ages 13 and older, $3 for children ages 4-12, and free for children ages three and under.

Concessions will be available throughout the evening.

Family Swim Night provides an opportunity for families and community members to enjoy an evening of swimming, recreation and fellowship in a safe, family-friendly environment.

For additional information about the event, contact the Buchanan County YMCA at 276-935-8871.



