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Warner brings \$1.5 million for flood recovery during County visit

By CHAD COOPER
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U.S. Sen. Mark Warner, D-Va., returned to Buchanan County on July 1, bringing a \$1.5 million federal investment to help families continue rebuilding from the devastating floods that have impacted the county over the past couple of years.

Warner visited the Southwest Virginia Community College Southern Gap Transportation and Logistics Center, where he was joined by local elected officials, community leaders and residents to celebrate federal funding secured for Buchanan County. The event focused on long-term flood recovery efforts through the Appala-

chian Service Project, which will use the funding to construct replacement homes for families whose homes were destroyed by flooding.

Southwest Virginia Community College President Dr. Clinton Hayes welcomed the crowd and thanked those in attendance for supporting the region's future. "Today is my one-year anniversary," Hayes said, noting it had been one year since he became president of the college.

Hayes said the Southern Gap facility was proud to host the gathering. "So we're honored to welcome so many community leaders, elected officials,

SEE \$1.5 MILLION | 6A



CHAD COOPER | Virginia Mountaineer

U.S. Sen. Mark Warner announces federal funding for Buchanan County during a July 1 event at the Southwest Virginia Community College Southern Gap Transportation and Logistics Center. Warner presented ceremonial checks to support flood recovery efforts through the Appalachian Service Project and to purchase a new fire truck for the Town of Grundy.

Grundy celebrates Independence Day with fireworks and music

By CHAD COOPER
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The summer heat didn't keep the crowds away last Friday as families from across Buchanan County packed downtown Grundy for an evening of music, fireworks and hometown fellowship during the community's annual Independence Day celebration.

This year's celebration carried extra meaning as residents not only celebrated the nation's Independence Day, but also recognized America's upcoming 250th anniversary and Buchanan County's 150th anniversary.

Earlier in the afternoon, families gathered outside the Grundy Community Center for the annual Big Wheel Bash hosted by the Grundy Fire Department. Despite temperatures climbing into the 90s, children eagerly explored fire trucks, ambulances, police cruisers, coal trucks, tow trucks and other heavy equipment while meeting the men and women who operate them. Parents and grandparents watched as youngsters climbed inside the vehicles, sounded horns and learned more about the equipment that serves their community.

As the evening progressed, crowds filled the Grundy Town Center for the annual celebration, with lawn chairs lining the streets as families settled in for entertainment.

Blue Reign took the stage and quickly engaged the audience, performing a variety of songs that

SEE INDEPENDENCE DAY | 6A



CHAD COOPER | Virginia Mountaineer

Colorful bursts of fireworks illuminate the sky above Grundy, providing the grand finale to the town's annual Independence Day celebration.

Sheriff Boyd responds to new controversial gun laws

By CHAD COOPER
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As Virginia's new firearm laws continue to spark debate across the Commonwealth, Buchanan County Sheriff Allen W. Boyd says his office will not pursue enforcement of several of the new measures while the courts determine whether they are constitutional.

The legislation, which took effect July 1, includes restrictions on the future sale, transfer, manufacture and import of certain semi-automatic firearms classified as assault weapons, limits on magazines capable of holding more than 15 rounds, an increase in the minimum age to purchase handguns and newly defined assault firearms from 18 to 21, expanded safe-storage requirements and additional restrictions on where certain firearms may be carried. Other provisions expand firearm prohibitions for some convicted offenders and prohibit firearms in additional locations.

Several of the new laws are currently the subject of ongoing legal challenges, with portions temporarily blocked while the courts review their constitutionality.

In a statement released this week, Boyd said his office has received numerous questions from residents about the legislation, particularly House Bill 217, Senate Bill 749 and Senate Bill 727.

"I have received a significant number of questions

SEE GUN LAWS | 1A



Warner discusses CFX, AI and future of Southwest Virginia

By CHAD COOPER
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While U.S. Sen. Mark Warner's July 1 visit to Buchanan County centered on federal funding for flood recovery and public safety projects, the senator also spent considerable time discussing the future of Southwest Virginia during an open question-and-answer session with local officials and community leaders.

Following presentations at the Southwest Virginia Community College Southern Gap Transportation and Logistics Center, Warner invited those in attendance to share concerns and ask questions about issues affecting the region.

One of Warner's strongest commitments involved the long-awaited Coalfields Expressway.

"I will promise that we get the Coalfields Expressway done before I die," Warner said, drawing laughter from the audience. "That means I'm going to do this last term because, as I'm trying to get

reelected, I work in the only place in America where at age 71 that makes me lower middle age."

Warner noted that additional federal funding has recently been secured for the project and said completing the highway remains one of his top priorities.

Buchanan County Supervisor Trey Adkins raised concerns about residents who continue to struggle to replace bridges and retaining walls destroyed during recent flooding. Adkins said many homeowners still face repair costs far beyond current state funding limits. Adkins informed the senator that the formula the government uses to determine disaster relief money is not fair to rural areas.

Warner asked Adkins to provide the language from the current legislation and pledged to review possible changes.

"You need to get it to Shane (Clem, an aide to the senator) today," Warner said. "Let me see if I can — can't promise —

SEE WARNER DISCUSSES | 2A



CHAD COOPER | Virginia Mountaineer

Breaks Regional Airport Authority Chairman James Keen provides an update on the airport project during a question-and-answer session with U.S. Sen. Mark Warner on July 1 at the Southwest Virginia Community College Southern Gap Transportation and Logistics Center. Keen discussed progress on the airport's master plan and thanked Warner for his longstanding support of the project.

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Photo courtesy of BSSWCD

COMMUNITY GARDEN GRANT — Big Sandy Soil and Water Conservation District Conservation Technician Jake Hess (left), Prater Supervisor David Rose (middle) and Big Sandy Soil and Water Conservation District Board Member Bobby Looney (right) display a \$1,000 Keep America Beautiful Green Grant check at the future site of the community garden at Southern Gap. The grant will fund the construction of the garden's first raised planting beds, with plans to expand the project in the coming years.

Big Sandy's community garden taking root at the Gap

By **CHAD COOPER**
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Residents will soon have a new opportunity to grow fresh produce close to home as a community garden takes root at Southern Gap, thanks to a \$1,000 grant awarded to the Big Sandy Soil and Water Conservation District.

The district received a Keep America Beautiful Green Grant after submitting a funding application. Big Sandy Soil and Water Conservation Education Specialist and District Manager Jeanne Presley said the organization was notified in early June that the application had been approved, and that the grant check arrived last week.

Construction on the first raised garden beds is expected to begin immediately.

"We applied for the Keep America Beautiful green grant to begin the community garden. We were notified that our application was approved around the first of June. We received the check last week and intend to start building the garden boxes this week. We will be planting some initial crops when the boxes are complete," Presley said.

The project will initially include nine raised garden boxes, with plans for significant future expansion. Presley said organizers hope the garden becomes a community resource where residents can grow their own vegetables and create educational opportunities for local children.

"Next year we hope to have residents reserve the

boxes and plant their own little garden. It is also a goal to grow a pumpkin patch so that students can pick a pumpkin without having to travel to Tazewell County. If anyone is interested in reserving a box for next year, they can contact our office, and we will add them to the list. We have already had a great response from Buchanan County residents to the use of the boxes. My goal is to expand the gardens as large as possible," Presley said.

Big Sandy Soil and Water District board member Bobby Looney praised the collaborative effort that made the project possible.

"Another big win for Big Sandy Soil and Water Conservation District and Buchanan County," Looney said. "Thanks for your help, David Rose, Prater Supervisor, on the community garden grant coming soon to Popular Gap Park."

Presley said the first phase of the project will focus on establishing the initial raised beds before expanding in future years.

"We are going to begin with the boxes we are building. I believe we will have nine boxes to begin with," Presley said. "Then we are hoping to expand next year to additional boxes. If anyone would like to reserve a box, they can contact our office at 276-935-7750."

Organizers encourage anyone interested in reserving a garden box for the 2027 growing season to contact the Big Sandy Soil and Water Conservation District office at 276-935-7750. A waiting list is already being established due to strong community interest.

Council freshman earns first-place honors at 4-H Congress

By **CHAD COOPER**
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Buchanan County 4-H member Zoey McGlothlin, a freshman at Council High School, earned first-place honors and received a blue ribbon during the Virginia State 4-H Senior Level Competitions held June 17 as part of Virginia 4-H Congress at Virginia Tech.

McGlothlin claimed the top award after advancing from the Buchanan County 4-H Talent Competition, where she was named the overall winner earlier this year. A talented guitarist and vocalist, she represented Buchanan County at the state competition, showcasing her musical abilities against some of Virginia's top 4-H participants.

Virginia 4-H Congress brings together outstanding 4-H members from across the commonwealth for leadership activities, educational programs and statewide competitions. The annual event recognizes excellence in a variety of project areas while providing youth with opportunities to develop leadership skills and build relationships with fellow 4-H members.



Photo courtesy of Buchanan County Extension Office

Council High School freshman Zoey McGlothlin displays the blue ribbon she received after earning first-place honors in the Virginia State 4-H Senior Level Competitions during Virginia 4-H Congress at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg on June 17. McGlothlin represented Buchanan County after winning the county's 4-H Talent Competition earlier this year.

WARNER DISCUSSES

FROM PAGE 1A

but get Shane exactly what we need corrected."

The discussion also turned to the Breaks Regional Airport.

Breaks Regional Airport Authority Chairman James Keen updated Warner on the project's progress, explaining that rough grading has been completed and work is now moving into development of the airport's master plan.

Keen credited Warner for helping the project overcome numerous federal hurdles over the years.

Warner said he remains committed to helping move the airport project forward, particularly as it enters the next phase with federal agencies.

Artificial intelligence and data centers also became major topics of discussion.

Warner said AI technology is advancing at an unprecedented pace and warned that it could dramatically reshape the workforce during the next several years.

"I pray I'm wrong, but I'll take the bet that it will be 30% in two years," Warner said while discussing unemployment among recent college graduates due to the emergence of AI.

He encouraged students to pursue careers in health care, agriculture and education, fields he believes will continue experiencing strong demand despite advances in artificial intelligence.

Warner also outlined legislation he is developing to establish national standards for large data centers, including requirements for adequate power generation,

responsible water use, transparency and community protections.

Broadband expansion remained another priority.

Warner said federal investments have significantly expanded high-speed internet access across Buchanan County and expressed hope that remaining funding could eventually be used to eliminate gaps in cellular service throughout the region.

"I think if you can have that wireless coverage combined with broadband, that's not going to guarantee the community success, but not having it means you're not going to be as successful as you can and should be," he said.

Warner also fielded questions about support for senior services, the Older Americans Act, metallurgical coal, the Breaks Interstate Park, veterans services and rural economic development before concluding the event.

Throughout the discussion, Warner repeatedly emphasized that lasting progress depends on elected officials from both political parties working together.

"A lot of this is about working together," Warner said. "I know people presume in Washington everybody is always yelling at each other, hating each other. It's not the case."

Warner said finding bipartisan solutions remains the best way to secure investments and deliver meaningful results for communities across Southwest Virginia.



Courthouse News

By **CHAD COOPER**
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Marriage licenses

Blaine Allen Crouse II, 34, and Sarah Renia Cable, 32, both of Grundy, June 25, 2026.

Jonathan Richard Wallen, 31, of Stanville, Kentucky, and Allison Faith Wright, 23, of Pikeville, Kentucky, June 27, 2026.

Norman Shannon Shea Bailey III, 30, and Emily Catherine Ball, 26, both of Mohawk, West Virginia, June 27, 2026.

Gregory Kent Burbage Jr., 33, and Monica Lynn Coleman, 46, both of Grundy, June 28, 2026.

Deeds recorded

June 1 - Nadine Jackson Justus, to Johnny Mitchell Greene, ETAL, one tract left fork of Paw Paw, Knox Creek, \$35,000.00.

June 1 - Coy Contractors INC., to Blair Farms LLC., tract Bull Creek, \$7,500.00.

June 1 - Bobby J. Cole, ETAL, to GV REO 2026-1 LLC, tract Dismal River, \$57,900.00.

June 1 - Jackie Crystal Matney McCoy, to Kimberly Danielle McCoy, tract Right Hand Fork, Knox Creek, including double-wide, deed of gift.

June 2 - Otto Fletcher, ETAL, to Michael L. Ball, ETAL, four acres Russell Fork River, Hurricane District, \$3,000.00.

June 3 - Pal Thompson, to James Edward Thompson, tract Home Creek, Levisa River Fork, Big Sandy River, \$1.00, deed of gift.

June 3 - Melissa Justus, to Tony Cordell Justus, 10 acres Guesses Fork, Knox Creek, \$106,000.00.

June 4 - Freeman Harris, ETAL, to Freeman Wesley Harris, ETAL, tract Combs Ridge Hurricane District, \$1.00, deed of gift.

June 4 - Brenda Bowman, ETAL, to Brenda Bowman, ETAL, 4.88 acres Bull Creek, Levisa River, deed of gift.

June 5 - Justin C. Hall, to Anna Grubb, ETAL, one and a half acres, Buchanan County, \$185,000.00.

June 5 - Gary L. Deel, to Betty Leona Layne, 0.2100 acres Dry Fork, Big Prater Creek, Levisa River, South Grundy District, deed of gift.

June 8 - Freeman Harris, ETAL, to Jonathan Travis Harris, 0.45 acres Combs Ridge Indian Creek, Russell Fork, Big Sandy River, \$1.00, deed of gift.

June 8 - Janet Kim Dugger, to Frederick V. Keen, 32.25 acres Buchanan County, deed of gift.

June 8 - James Higbie, to Philippa W. Heathcock, parcel A consisting of three tracts Mill Creek, Knox Creek, parcel eight coal, mineral and lumber rights, deed of gift.

June 8 - Lizzie Ann Deel, to Justin Lee Blankenship, ETAL, half interest tract Russell Prater Creek, deed of gift.

June 8 - Johnny Lee Dye, ETAL, to Michael Joey Elswick, ETAL, 2.925 acres, Cove Hollow, Bull Creek, Levisa River, Rock Lick District, \$83,000.00.

June 9 - Betty Ruth Austin, to Betty Ruth Austin, ETAL, three parcels, Grissom Creek, Russell Fork River, deed of gift.

June 9 - Betty Ruth Austin, to Betty Ruth Austin, ETAL, four tracts, Grissom Creek, Russell Fork, Big Sandy River, deed of gift.

June 9 - Viola Rentals LLC, to C&S Mobile Home Park, tract Little Prater Creek, deed of gift.

June 11 - Shelby O'Quin to Terry O'Quin, two tracts Big Branch, Russell Prater Creek, \$30,000.00.

June 11 - Debra Denise Duty to Brandon Matthew Evans, six tracts Poplar Creek, Levisa River, \$1.00, deed of gift - life estate.

June 11 - James Russell Duty, to Debra Denise Duty, tract Poplar Creek, Levisa River, \$1.00, deed of gift - life estate.

June 12 - Adam Farmern, to Pamela Denise Tester, two tracts, Garden Creek, Hurricane District, \$50,000.00.

June 15 - Roger Lee Potter, to Roger Lee Potter, 24 acres, Hobbs Branch, Slate Creek, deed of gift.

June 15 - Bertha Justus, ETAL, to Brandon Davis, ETAL, tracts, Right Hand Fork, Guesses Fork, Knox Creek, \$17,500.00.

June 15 - IS Ratliff, ETAL, to Greg Rowe, ETAL, tract Slate Creek, \$70,000.00.

June 16 - Elwood Dykes, to Grayson Griffith, ETAL, 0.24 acre Garden Creek, Youngs Branch, Hurricane District, \$190,000.00.

June 16 - Dennis Alan Ramey, ETAL, to Board of Supervisors of Buchanan County, 0.76 acre and right-of-way, Levisa Fork River, South Grundy District, \$195,500.00.

June 16 - Donna Cora Price, to Evelyn Sue Vance, tract Contrary Keen Mountain section, \$40,000.00.

June 17 - Luther Davis, ETAL, to Buchanan Mining Company LLC., Compton Mountain, Loggy Bottom Branch, Dismal River, \$400.00.

June 18 - Harold Hale, ETAL, to Jack Wright, ETAL, two tracts Big Prater Creek, \$1.00, deed of gift.

June 22 - Lola Gay Hardin, ETAL, to Michael Paul Seabolt, ETAL, life estate .25 acre, Mill Branch, Slate Creek, \$160,000.00.

June 22 - Lola Gay Hardin, ETAL, to Michael Paul Seabolt, ETAL, life estate 58 acres, North Grundy District, deed of gift.

June 22 - Donnie Keith Childress, to Donnie Keith Childress, right-of-way, two tracts, Straight Fork, Knox District, deed of gift.

June 22 - Udell Breeding, to Jeffrey Ray, ETAL, 7.120 acres, Hurricane Creek, deed of gift.

June 22- Candace Jane Rash Horton, to Frances Taynell Stiltner, tracts Lester Fork, \$13,000.00.



LOOKING BACK

From our files

65 YEARS AGO

JULY 20, 1961

Roger Powers, newly installed president of the Grundy Lions Club, this week announced committee appointments for the new Lions fiscal year. Besides Powers, other new officers installed were: Buddy Frazier, first vice president; Jack Merritt, second vice president; Tivis Mullins Jr., third vice president; Ralph Fox, secretary-treasurer.

Butch Tylenda, son of Mr. and Mrs. B.H. Tylenda has returned from the annual International Convention of Key Clubs which closed last Wednesday in Philadelphia. Butch, who is the Lt. Gov. of the 8th Division Capital District, attended with other boys from this area.

55 YEARS AGO

JULY 8, 1971

Approximately 100 guests, including colleagues, clients and friends, attended a party honoring the retirement of Miss Marjorie Coleman last Friday night at Willowbrook Country Club. Miss Coleman, a Grundy attorney and the only woman ever to practice law in Buchanan County or in the 27th Judicial Circuit, retired on June 30, after 32 years of practice.

Harman Little League is the regular season of Buchanan County Little League Baseball, which ended last month. Members of the team were Larry Scammel, Benny McCowan, Kenneth Chambers, Ralph Skeens, Billy Clevinger, Glen Turner, Gary Stiltner, Archie Maynard, Britty Hunt, Alan Whited, Greg Clevinger, Steve McClanahan, Jimmy Yates and Jerry Bartley. The team was coached by Jimmy Maynard and Jimmy Goff was team manager.

45 YEARS AGO

JULY 9, 1981

H.C. Van Meter, formerly Vice President of Operations, has been elected President of Jewell Smokeless Coal Corporation, Jewell Coal & Coke Company and Dominion Coal Corporation. The Board of Directors' action was announced by B.R. Thompson, Sr., Chairman of the Board.

Twelve members of Garden High School's first state championship basketball team were on hand for their 30-year reunion of the 1951 class. The Dragons won the state title on another occasion during the early 1950s. Those in attendance were Jesse Hagy, Erce Miller, Kermit Wooldridge, Kenneth Woods, Jackie Nichols, Bill Cook, Hassell Wooldridge, Don Ken, Bill Crigger, Terry Skeens, Leo Tickle, and "Shot" Leon McClanahan.

20 YEARS AGO

JULY 13, 2006

Pikeville College has settled on one of its own, and Grundy's, after a search for a new baseball coach. Don Ashby, assistant to the vice president of student services and who served as assistant baseball coach last spring, has been named the new head coach. Ashby, a native of Grundy and standout athlete of Grundy High School, replaces Johnnie LeMaster as head baseball coach. LeMaster, a Paintsville native who was the sixth overall pick in the 1973 baseball draft, is the all-time winningest baseball coach in Pikeville College history.

For Twin Valley's Brian Moore, Tuesday was to be his first appearance as an All-Star coach. For Haysi's Whitney Compton, it will probably be her last organized basketball game as a player. Both Moore and Compton are taking part in this week's Virginia High School Coaches Association all-star games. Moore is on the West coaching staff in the boys All-Star basketball contest, while Compton is on the West roster for the girls' All-Star basketball game.



Photos courtesy of Buchanan County Extension Office

Buchanan County Extension Agent Sandy Shortridge (center) is pictured with Teen Leader Aleya McClanahan (left) and Autumn Yates (right) during Buchanan County 4-H Camp. Local youth spent the week participating in outdoor recreation, leadership activities, educational programs and team-building experiences.

Buchanan 4-H'ers enjoys week at Junior 4-H Camp

By **CHAD COOPER**

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Nearly 50 Buchanan County youth and volunteers spent a week making memories, developing leadership skills and building lifelong friendships during the annual Buchanan, Bland and Grayson Junior 4-H Camp held June 22-26 at the Southwest Virginia 4-H Educational Center.

A total of 37 Buchanan County campers, seven teen leaders, four adult leaders and one Virginia Cooperative Extension employee attended the weeklong camp, joining participants from Bland and Grayson counties for the annual summer tradition. This year's camp theme was "4-H Holidays in the Sun."

Throughout the week, campers participated in educational classes, recreational activities, outdoor adventures, team-building exercises and evening programs designed to promote leadership, citizenship and personal responsibility while creating lasting friendships.

"This year's camp went great," Buchanan County Extension Agent Sandy Shortridge said about the week. "The theme was '4-H Seasons in the Sun.' Each night we celebrated a different holiday; those included: St. Patrick's Day, Easter, Independence Day and Halloween. Thursday night, we put on Halloween costumes, went trick-or-treating on the campgrounds, and then enjoyed the Monster Mash Dance. Our talent show was very enjoyable with youth performances from all three counties. We concluded on Thursday night with an awards ceremony and a beautiful candle lighting ceremony. The kids enjoyed their classes, which included Archery, swimming, kayaking, zip line,

cooking, fishing, crafts, and many more. We had quite a few new campers and even more returning campers. All seemed to enjoy the week, and in their goodbyes to their friends, I heard them say, "I'll see you next year."

Buchanan County participants earned several individual honors during the week.

Teen leader Aleyah McClanahan, a Twin Valley High School student, received the Responsibility Character Award in recognition of her outstanding leadership and dedication throughout camp.

"This year camp went fantastic and will always hold a special place in my heart as it was my last year as a ran leader," McClanahan shared. "Some of the highlights would be that I had a really great camper and it was one of the best years I've had so far. These kids have made my last year the specials."

Autumn Yates, a student at Riverview Elementary Middle School, earned the Citizenship Character Award for demonstrating exceptional citizenship during the week.

Aalayah Barton, also a Riverview Elementary Middle School student, received the 2026 4-H Camp Friendship Award, recognizing her positive attitude and willingness to include and encourage fellow campers.

Two Buchanan County campers were also selected as the 2026 Campers of the Week.

Rylan Lester and Graycee McGlothlin, both students at Riverview Elementary Middle School, received the honor for their outstanding participation and leadership during camp. As Campers of the Week, each earned an all-expenses-paid return trip to Junior 4-H Camp in 2027.

Shortridge said the annual camp continues to provide young people with opportunities to learn, grow and develop valuable life skills while enjoying the outdoors and forming



Photos courtesy of Buchanan County Extension Office

Aalayah Barton enjoys her time at Buchanan County 4-H Camp, where local youth participated in a week of outdoor adventures, educational programs, recreational activities and leadership development. Barton received this year 4-H Camp Friendship Award.

friendships that often last for years.

Junior 4-H Camp is one of Virginia Cooperative Extension's signature youth development programs, providing hands-on educational experiences that help young people build confidence, leadership abilities and a commitment to serving their communities.

The annual camp brings together youth from across Southwest Virginia each summer, giving participants opportunities to explore new interests while strengthening the values of leadership, responsibility, teamwork and citizenship that are central to the 4-H program.



Photos courtesy of Buchanan County Extension Office

Rylan Lester (left), Buchanan County Extension Agent Sandy Shortridge (center) and camper Graycee McGlothlin (right) pause for a photo during Buchanan County 4-H Camp. Campers took part in a variety of hands-on activities designed to build confidence, leadership skills and lifelong friendships. Lester and McGlothlin were named Campers of the Week.

GOOD OL DAYS



By CHAD COOPER

On the left, participants dressed in period clothing take part in the 1976 Buchanan County Day celebration held in downtown Grundy in early July of 1976. Pictured, from left, are Zedie Davis, Ruth Watkins, Rosalee Shortt and Geraldine Shortridge. Davis's dress was more than 200 years old. On the right, men in 1976 also dressed in period attire for the Buchanan County Day celebration in downtown Grundy. Pictured from left are Jesse Stewart, Buchanan County Administrator Edward Matney, Grundy United Methodist Church Pastor Earl Vanover, and Otis Matney. Vanover entertained the crowd by playing several tunes on his dulcimer.

Congressman Griffith: WFTC

The Republican Congress continues to use the reconciliation process to produce conservative wins for the American people. Not only were the Working Families Tax Cuts (WFTC) done in a reconciliation bill, but earlier this June, Congress passed another reconciliation bill to fully fund federal immigration enforcement agencies through the rest of President Trump's term. This had to happen after "open borders" Democrats refused to fund the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Because of their obstruction, the DHS shutdown was the longest agency shutdown in U.S. history. With Republicans' passage of this immigration enforcement reconciliation package, we blocked Democrats from defunding the federal agencies responsible for removing criminal illegal aliens. I will continue to support policies that protect American communities from Biden-Harris "open borders" policies. A potential reconciliation package is also being discussed to help with things ranging from defense funding to voter ID policies. As of right now, a final draft of a potential reconciliation bill

has yet to be produced. Delivering conservative wins through the reconciliation process is evident from the Working Families Tax Cuts that President Trump signed into law on July 4, 2025. I was proud to back this transformative package, which prevented tax hikes on working families and delivered other meaningful tax relief reforms. Data is now available on how these reforms are helping Americans. According to the U.S. Department of Treasury, 97% of tax filers accessed these tax cut benefits. The Ways and Means Committee in Congress notes that IRS data shows Americans received an average refund of nearly \$3,300, marking a greater than 11% increase in average individual refunds year over year. By passing this legislation, the Ways and Means committee notes that we stopped a tax increase of 22% for the average taxpayer. Additionally, tax filers took advantage of new opportunities. More than 7 million Americans claimed a deduction for tips. This follows on President Trump's "No Tax on Tips" promise. But Republican lawmakers did



WEEKLY REPORT
FROM THE CAPITOL

not stop there. We also created a deduction for those who work hourly overtime. This tax season, nearly 30 million filers claimed this deduction. Further, an enhanced senior bonus deduction allowed seniors on social security to keep more of their money. The \$6,000 bonus is in place for single filers and \$12,000 for joint filers. While we strengthen economic prospects for working families through this tax relief, Republicans also advance businesses with a focus on 'Made in America.' Johnson & Johnson, a pharmaceutical manufacturer, is one company expanding domestic operations in the United States. The company's CEO, Mr. Joaquin Duato, credited Republicans' legislation for his company moving forward with the \$55 billion expansion. The reconciliation bill also de-

livers vital health care funding to rural communities through the Rural Health Transformation Program. Virginia is the recipient of more than \$189 million thanks to the Rural Health Transformation Program. This pot of money helps rural hospital providers in Virginia's Ninth District. That includes Virginia Highlands Community College in Abingdon, to which Virginia awarded its first Program grant. This award will help the College expand healthcare workforce training opportunities. As medical deserts threaten health care access, grants like these can help close the provider gap, develop a pipeline of rural health care workers and better serve rural patients. As more Rural Health Transformation Program awards flow to our region, I will continue to advocate for tax policies that help our region. Such policies include the New Markets Tax Credit, which we permanently extended in the Working Families Tax Cuts. This tax credit has been credited for the construction of a new medical office building in Tazewell County!

This facility is creating new options for health care, which in turn is helping Carilion Tazewell Community Hospital. Further, I believe that the reconciliation package's boosted tax incentives for Opportunity Zones in rural areas can unlock more potential health care opportunity. A tax structure that promotes investments in rural communities can produce dividends! These ideas show that the tax policies we advanced in the Working Families Tax Cut support our economic prospects. Further, I will continue to consider reconciliation ideas that produce prosperity, opportunity and freedom for the American people. If you have ideas, please feel free to contact our office. If you have questions, concerns, or comments, feel free to contact my office. You can call my Abingdon office at 276-525-1405 or my Christiansburg office at 540-381-5671. To reach my office via email, please visit my website at <https://morgangriffith.house.gov/>. Also on my website is the latest material from my office, including information on votes recently taken on the floor of the House of Representatives.

Hello Readers

We didn't make it to church but I got to watch the service online. Brother Kenny Coleman brought the message, Fear Not. He read Isaiah 41:10-13, Psalm 46:10-11, Psalm 145:8-14 and Philippians 4:13. He said at the beginning there was someone out there that needed to hear this message. I can tell him it was me and Ray. Wonderful, blessed message! Thank you Brother Kenny... Harman Freewill Baptist Church has announced the dates for their upcoming Vacation Bible School. The theme is Glow Go Light Our World! It will be held July 26, 27 and 28th from 6:00pm until 8:30pm. Everyone is welcome! Sunday and Monday were rough on Ray. The heat and humidity make anyone with lung problems suffer. Pray for him please!! The feral cat I feed has gifted me with 5 kittens to bottle feed. She had them in the rafters of our garage and we just located them. Amelia climbed the ladder and helped get them down. It's so hot and humid I was afraid they would die but once I moved them she quit having anything to do with them. Wednesday morning we were up early headed to Lebanon to the doctor. We stopped at Hardee's for breakfast and the doctor was kind enough to work him in early. He had a couple of tests, we'll get results in the morning. We had 2 deer run across the road in front of us today. One I saw coming towards us from the right and I just stopped and waited on it to cross. The other was enough in front of us but one car ran out of the road and a semi truck just bowed up and stopped. We stopped at the Lebanon Walmart and I went into KFC to get lunch and supper. I ran into two sweet friends from Council I hadn't seen in months. It was so good to see



DEBBIE
FOSTER

ROCKLICK AREA NEWS
276-935-8296

them even just for a few minutes. I went to the store Thursday and got my turkey and dressing for lunch from Double Kwik. I stopped on the way home and got Ray's cheeseburger and fries, no cooking today! Happy 250th birthday America!! Ray and I graduated in 1976, America's 200th birthday, the bicentennial. That means we graduated from high school 50 years ago!! Do you realize what that means?? We're old!!! I got up early Saturday morning and straightened up the house. We've got family coming to visit from Kentucky. The last time I saw them was before Daddy died. That had me thinking, there's not a lot of our generation of family around. We had a good visit. I went and got a pizza after they left. I saw Little Man and he was telling me all about the fireworks last night. I told him what a big, brave boy he was for not being afraid! Reminder, the mobile food truck, Feeding Southwest Virginia, an equal opportunity provider, will be at the Council Park on Thursday July 9th. The truck arrives about 9:00 and giveaway starts about 10:00. This is a drive thru event, stay in your car we will come to 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, Jacob, Shawn, Charles, Eugene, Melinda,

Stanley (broken heel) and Crystal, Steve, Scotty, Brother Kenny, Freddie and Sheila, Darrell and Vicki, Hudson, Amber, Dennis (urgent prayers needed!) and Kathy, Courtland, Amy, Anthony, Henry, Jerry, Farley and family, Pastor Gene and Joyce Miller, Lilly, Clarence and Reba, Matt, Jerry and Lona, Brenda, Justin, Glenda (needs urgent prayers!), Shirley, JJ, Mike, Jack, Pastor Ronnie and Alma Sliger, Timmy, Riley, Darrell, Debbie (pray hard for my sweet friend!), Maryann, 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 (double knee replacement) PPTA, Pam, Phillip, Peggy and Family, Renee, Melissa, Charlie, Linda, Gordon, Miss Irene, Elmo, Teresa, Chris, Anthony, Miss Pauline, Henson and his family (very urgent prayers needed!), Margie, Melinda, Archie and Cathy, Martha, Colton, Ira, Jennifer, Daniel, Tracy, Glenda, Anderson, Nicole, Dave, Hope, Liz, Barbara, Danny, Brenda, Nancy, Joe and Sherry, Gail, Bobby, Christie, Kenny, Baby Weston, Baby Leon, Sandy, Buck and Harriet, Raymond, Mary, Wanda, Lois, Darrell, Sue, Jeff, Shirley, little Zach (keep praying!), Bobby, Mary Lou, Dreama, 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 can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. Philippians 4:13 KJV Until next week...

Adult education connection

Returning to school as an adult is an exciting step toward achieving personal and professional goals. Whether you're earning a diploma, learning new job skills, or pursuing a college degree, balancing school with work, family, and other responsibilities can sometimes feel overwhelming. While dedication is important, it's equally important to recognize the signs of burnout and take steps to prevent it. Burnout is more than simply feeling tired after a long day. It is a state of physical, mental, and emotional exhaustion caused by prolonged stress. Adult students experiencing burnout may struggle to concentrate, lose motivation, feel constantly fatigued, or even question whether continuing their education is worthwhile. However, burnout can often be prevented with healthy habits and realistic expectations. One of the most effective ways to avoid burnout is by setting achievable goals. Instead of focusing only on the finish line, break larger assignments or long-term goals into smaller, manageable tasks. Completing small milestones creates a sense of accomplishment and keeps motivation high.



BEVERLY
PRATER
ASHBY

Time management is another essential skill. Creating a weekly schedule that includes study time, work responsibilities, family commitments, and personal time helps reduce stress. Even setting aside 30 to 60 minutes of focused study on certain days, if possible, can be more effective than trying to complete everything at the last minute. It's also important to recognize that rest is productive. Many adult learners feel guilty about taking breaks, but regular periods of rest actually improve concentration, memory, and overall performance. Another matter to consider is asking for help when it is needed. Instructors, tutors, advisors, and classmates are valuable resources when coursework becomes challenging. Reaching out early can prevent small difficulties from becoming overwhelming obstacles. Remember that earning your education is a marathon, not a sprint. Progress doesn't require perfection. By managing your time wisely, maintaining healthy habits, seeking support, and giving yourself grace along the way, you can reduce the risk of burnout and continue moving confidently toward your goals. Your educational journey is an investment in your future. Taking care of yourself today ensures you'll have the energy, resilience, and determination to be successful.

Adult cosmetology in-service planned July 13 at REMS

By CHAD COOPER
coopkam@gmail.com

Adults interested in pursuing a career in cosmetology or learning more about training opportunities are invited to attend a cosmetology in-service later this month. The informational session will be held July 13 at 10 a.m. at Riverview Elementary/Middle School. The event is designed for adults interested in enrolling in cosmetology classes during the upcoming school year. Organizers say the in-service will provide prospective students with information

about the cosmetology program and the opportunities available through the upcoming academic year. Attendees will have the chance to learn more about the program and ask questions about enrollment and training. The cosmetology program is intended to help adults develop skills for careers in the beauty industry while providing hands-on instruction and professional training. Anyone seeking additional information about the in-service or the cosmetology program may contact Peggy Lowe at peggy.lowe@bcpsk12.com. The event is open to adults interested in exploring cosmetology education and career opportunities.

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Savvy Senior: How to Make Sure Your End-of-Life Wishes Are Followed

Dear Savvy Senior,

I had a living will/advance directive prepared about 10 years ago documenting my end-of-life medical wishes, but I've read that these documents are often ignored. What can you tell me about this?

--Troubled Tina

Dear Tina,

Yes, unfortunately, that can happen. Living wills aren't always followed in practice, most often because the document isn't available when it's needed or never reaches the right people in time. They can also fall short because they aren't medical orders, and the language may be too vague to guide doctors in an emergency. That doesn't mean your wishes won't be honored, but it does mean a little extra planning can

help prevent confusion later.

Here's how to make sure your wishes are followed.

Advance directive + POLST

About 40 percent of older Americans have an advance directive. This typically includes a living will that spells out the care you want if you become incapacitated, and a health care power of attorney (or proxy) who is authorized to make decisions on your behalf.

To strengthen those instructions, talk with your doctor about completing a POLST (Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment) – sometimes called MOLST or POST depending on your state. Unlike a living will, this is a doctor-signed medical order that must be followed by EMTs and hospital staff. It translates your wishes into clear instructions for



JIM MILLER
SAVVY SENIOR

treatments such as CPR, breathing machines, and feeding tubes.

These interventions can save lives but may also cause harm if you are very ill or frail. Discussing them ahead of time helps you weigh the trade-offs and makes it easier for your family to understand your choices, easing stress if decisions must be made quickly.

Even if you already have an advance directive, adding a POLST can make your wishes clearer. Without one, first responders are generally required

to attempt resuscitation and transport you to a hospital, where doctors may pursue aggressive treatment if your living will isn't available or specific enough.

Once your POLST is completed, make sure it is easy to find. Keep a copy on the refrigerator, carry one in your wallet, and save a photo on your phone. Share copies with your health care proxy, family members, and physicians so everyone is aligned.

It's also wise to ask your providers to add the form to your electronic health record, since medical information isn't always shared between hospitals and care facilities. These steps can make a real difference in helping ensure your wishes are followed.

If discussing these issues with family feels difficult, websites like

The Conversation Project (theconversationproject.org) and Prepare for Your Care (prepareforyourcare.org) offer helpful guidance.

One final note: if you're planning surgery, you may want to temporarily suspend your POLST in case your heart stops briefly during the procedure.

And if you haven't yet created an advance directive, you can do so for free at caringinfo.org or mydirectives.com, or for a small fee – \$5 to \$7.50 – at fivewishes.org. Taking these steps now can help ensure your wishes are followed and ease the burden on your loved ones later.

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

The Watchman: Fools For Christ's Sake

250 years ago, fifty-six men signed the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. They put everything on the line, their wealth, their lives, and their futures, knowing that if it failed, they would be hung for treason.

Many at the time thought they were fools for believing they could defeat the most powerful British Empire. It was said that the sun never set on the British Empire, a phrase used to describe the vastness of the empire, highlighting the fact that at any given time, there was always daylight in some part of the empire due to its global expansion.

The Apostle Paul, in 1 Corinthians, said we are fools for Christ's sake. That's just what these brave, courageous men did on July 4, 1776. They became fools in the eyes of the world at that time for Christ's sake. They were mostly Christians, and they put it all on the line for a life of peace, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. What made them so great was their belief in the cause of liberty from the British Empire, which was pressuring them heavily with taxation without representation. Freedom of religion was first in their minds because the First Amendment protected freedom of religion, freedom of speech, and a free press. It also protects the right to peaceful assembly and to petition the government.

The Second Amendment protects the right to keep and bear arms, in service of maintaining our democracy. At this time in history, a group of men led one of the greatest revolutions of all time and birthed one of the greatest nations in the world against all odds. This ragtag patriot troops, led by General George Washington, were poorly trained, barely paid, badly equipped, and greatly outnumbered by the British army. But with the help of the almighty God, a nation was born that would become a beacon of freedom to the world and send missionaries to promote Christianity in foreign countries.



JERRY WARD
THE WATCHMAN

Today, after 250 years, the American Christian republic still stands by the grace of God, yet its foundations have seriously eroded. Like the men of old who became fools for Christ's sake, we, the church, need to step up and meet the needs of society's poor. The scripture tells us in Acts 17:28, "For in him we live and move and have our being; in him we exist." Truly, God is the source of every man's provisions, to whom each man and woman must look. This teaching has been neglected because it's no longer being taught in the schools.

As we see America backsliding from Christian principles, God is looking for those who will stand up for the cause. As we see Marx's organization promoting socialism and communism among college men and women, they are also infiltrating the public schools of our nation. Communism does not believe in God. They believe that the government supplies all our needs, owns everything, and decides what our needs are accordingly.

Scripture says in Psalms 14:1 that the fool says in his heart there is no God. That's the reason communism has always failed. In him we live; without him, there is no life, only death. As God raised up an army, at that time God wants to raise up those who will preserve our constitution and our Republic, who will trust God and pray. God said in 1 Corinthians 1:27-28 that God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty. Verse 28 says that God hath chosen the base things of the world and the things which are despised, and things which are not to bring to nothing those things that are.

Mark your calendars for July 19-25. I will be in revival at Brother Jack Wright's church, New Harvest, on Route 83 at Vansant. Services will start at 7:00 pm each night. Also, don't forget the revival we will be having at Poplar Gap Park, also known as the Susie and Roger Rife Park. August 6-8, Brother Joel Horn, Steven and Lori Ward, J.T. Harman, and Jeremy and Amy Mickles will be joining us, along with youth who will be ministering in song and skit each night. Come and be with us. It's going to be an awesome time in the Lord.

The Watchman



Spotlight on the CAM

Summer Nights, Live Music, and Community

By JESSICA SAVAGE
Theatre Guild of Buchanan County

One of the most exciting additions to The CAM this year has been our brand-new Summer Concert Series! What began on the Third Thursday of May has quickly become a favorite community tradition, and we are so thrilled to continue the series through the Third Thursday of September.

Each month features a different live band and a different food truck, creating the perfect opportunity to gather with family and friends for an unforgettable summer evening. Our beautiful outdoor courtyard provides the perfect setting with comfortable tables and chairs, glowing string lights, and a welcoming atmosphere that makes you want to sit back, relax, and enjoy the music.

Our next concert will be Thursday, July 16, featuring the talented Midnight Gypsies.

The band is led by Kendra Nickles, a Buchanan County native from the Whitewood community, who serves as the band's lead vocalist, guitarist, and primary songwriter. Kendra now resides in Kingsport, Tennessee. Joining her are James Stiltner, lead guitarist from Hurley, Virginia; Tanya Kestner, bassist and vocalist from Bristol, Tennessee; and Bana Willis, drummer from Haysi, Virginia.

Midnight Gypsies has released six original songs that are available on iTunes, Spotify, YouTube, and most major music streaming platforms. During their live perfor-

mances, audiences can enjoy a mix of original music along with favorites spanning new country, classic country, and classic rock hits from the 1970s and 1980s.

Come hungry because Lester's Mountain Meats will also be joining us for the day. This family-owned food trailer from Richlands, Virginia, is known for producing some of the region's finest cured hams, sausage, bacon, and traditional smoked meats. They will also be serving delicious sides including smoked beans, coleslaw, nachos, chips, and more. We are excited to welcome them to Vansant for this month's Third Thursday celebration!

Events like our Summer Concert Series are about more than great music, they are about creating opportunities for our community to come together, support local musicians and small businesses, and enjoy quality entertainment right here at home. Our hope is to continue this tradition for years to come, and your support makes that possible.

The Summer Concert Series will continue on the Third Thursday of August and September, each featuring a new band and food truck. The complete lineup, ticket information, and online ticket purchasing links can be found on our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/TGBCVA or on our website at www.seeyouatthecam.com.

Tickets are just \$10 per person, making it an affordable evening filled with great music, delicious food, and wonderful company. We hope you will join us on July 16 and experience everything our Summer Concert Series has to offer. We can't wait to see you at The CAM.

Griffith staff to visit Grundy for traveling office hours July 14

By CHAD COOPER
coopkam@gmail.com

Buchanan County residents will have an opportunity to meet face-to-face with members of U.S. Rep. Morgan Griffith's staff when the congressman's traveling office visits Grundy on Tuesday, July 14.

District staff will be available from 1:30 to 3 p.m. at the Town of Grundy Offices, 1185 Plaza Drive, to assist residents with questions, concerns or problems involving federal agencies and services.

The traveling office hours are designed to make it easier for constituents to receive assistance without having to travel to one of Griffith's permanent district offices. Staff members can help residents who are experiencing difficulties with federal agencies, answer questions about federal programs and services, and en-

sure concerns are shared with the congressman's office.

No appointment is necessary, and residents are encouraged to stop by during the scheduled office hours.

The Grundy visit is part of a monthlong outreach effort across Virginia's Ninth Congressional District. Staff will make stops in Scott, Lee and Wise counties on July 8; Giles, Bland, Wythe, Radford, Smyth and Pulaski on July 9; Richlands and Grundy on July 14; Carroll County, Galax and Grayson County on July 15; Tazewell and Lebanon on July 16; Craig County and Roanoke County on July 21; Henry, Patrick and Floyd counties on July 22; Bedford and Franklin counties on July 23; and Dickenson County, Norton and Wise on July 28.

Officials encourage anyone who needs assistance with a federal matter or has questions for Griffith's office to take advantage of the visit while staff members are in Buchanan County.

ASL Canary Club to host Duck Duck Bingo fundraiser July 11

By CHAD COOPER
coopkam@gmail.com

The Appalachian School of Law's Canary Club will host its inaugural Duck, Duck, Bingo fundraiser on Saturday, July 11, offering an afternoon of games, prizes and community fellowship while raising money to support law students.

The event will be held in the Appellate Courtroom on the Appalachian School of Law campus. Doors will open at 1 p.m., with bingo games beginning at 2 p.m.

Participants can expect 20 rounds of bingo with a variety of prizes, including local getaway packages, memorabilia, event tickets, gift cards and other giveaways. Food and drinks will also be available during the event.

Tickets are \$25 and include six bingo cards, one jackpot card and a dabber. Members of the ASL Canary Club may purchase tickets for \$20. Presale tickets are available.

Additional bingo cards and supplies may also be purchased at the door. Extra six-card sheets will be available for \$20, jackpot cards for \$5 and dabbers for \$2.

According to event organizers, Duck Duck Bingo is designed to provide a fun, family-friendly atmosphere while supporting the Appalachian School of Law and its students.

All proceeds from the fundraiser will benefit ASL students through the Canary Club, an organization dedicated to supporting the future of Appalachian School of Law.

Community members interested in attending are encouraged to purchase tickets in advance or at the door on the day of the event.



CHAD COOPER | Virginia Mountaineer
Virginia Coalfields Economic Development Authority Executive Director Jonathan Belcher addresses the audience during Wednesday's event at the Southern Gap Transportation and Logistics Center. Belcher introduced U.S. Sen. Mark Warner and praised his longtime commitment to economic development projects across Southwest Virginia.

\$1.5 MILLION
FROM PAGE 1A

partners and residents who care deeply about the future of our region to the Southern Gap Facility (Southern Gap Transportation and Logistics Center)," Hayes said.

"So we're especially grateful to Senator Warner's Office for convening today's event and helping bring together voices across our local communities. And Southwest Virginia is strongest when we work together."

Hayes also highlighted an upcoming disaster preparedness event scheduled for July 23 at the Southern Gap facility before introducing Virginia Coalfield Economic Development Authority Executive Director Jonathan Belcher.

Belcher praised Warner's decades-long commitment to Southwest Virginia, recalling that he first met the senator in the late 1990s before Warner entered elected office.

"Senator Warner has had a passion for Southwest Virginia for more than 30 years," Belcher said. "He has always had Southwest Virginia in his heart."

Belcher said Warner has remained a strong advocate for economic development in the region throughout his career, pointing to his support of projects including the Coalfields Expressway.

When Warner took the podium, he opened with a joke after arriving a few minutes late because of a meeting with the Senate Intelligence Committee.

"I can't tell you what the call was about. I have to kill you all," Warner said jokingly. "If we do something wacky in the next 48 hours in the Middle East, I'm hoping we're not, but stay tuned."

Warner also laughed after Belcher mentioned knowing him since the 1990s, joking that he remembered when Belcher "had dark hair."

Turning to the purpose of his visit, Warner spoke about his appreciation for the people of the region.

"I love all parts of Virginia," Warner said. "Southwest Virginia is such a special place to be in. You know, it is a community

with grit, determination."

Warner then presented a ceremonial \$1.5 million check to the Appalachian Service Project. He said the funding was secured through a bipartisan effort with Sen. Tim Kaine and U.S. Rep. Morgan Griffith to help families continue to recover from Buchanan County's devastating floods.

Melisa Winburn, president and CEO of the Appalachian Service Project, was in attendance, thanked Warner, Kaine and Griffith for supporting the effort, and said the funding will have a lasting impact on local families.

"You know, we first got involved in disaster recovery here after 2021, when devastating floods changed families' lives in an instant," Winburn said. "And since that time, a few other floods have happened. So we are committed to be here and be part of this community in the recovery."

Winburn said the organization's mission extends beyond rebuilding homes.

"My personal belief is in a God of rainbows, and what that means to me is that we are not promised easy days all the time... But sometimes we get to be that presence of love, of neighborliness, of help to each other. And that's what I've seen this effort in this community do."

She introduced members of the organization's summer staff, who will spend the coming months working throughout Buchanan County.

"These young people dedicate an entire summer doing home repair for the families here," Winburn said. "We'll have about 500 volunteers coming through, not only doing great work and putting families in the state houses, but also buying ice cream and various different things from the community. We want to instill in them a love for Southwest Virginia in the same way that we have it."

Winburn said the funding represents much more than a dollar amount.

"These funds are dollars, and they're amazing, but this represents so



CHAD COOPER | Virginia Mountaineer
Melisa Winburn, president and CEO of the Appalachian Service Project, speaks during Wednesday's event at the Southern Gap Transportation and Logistics Center. Winburn thanked Sen. Mark Warner and other federal officials for securing \$1.5 million to help build new homes for Buchanan County families affected by flooding.

much more," she said. "This will help to rebuild brand new homes for at least a dozen families right up here, not very far from here, very high ground."

She added that the homes will provide security and hope to families who have endured years of uncertainty.

"So again, I'm grateful, Senator Warner, that you know that disaster recovery doesn't end when the headlines start to fade, but it takes years, and your willingness to stand beside this community to support Appalachian Service Project in this is huge."

Winburn concluded by inviting Warner to return when the new homes are complete, and families are ready to receive their keys.

"I'd like to hand over some keys to some people," she said.

Warner immediately accepted the invitation.

"Great, I appreciate that, and I'd love nothing more than to be here where the keys are in the hand at the door," Warner said.

Warner added that the funding came through congressionally directed spending.

"Also, I want to acknowledge this money we got; we call it congressionally designated spending, which is fancy talk for an earmark."

Warner then shifted his attention to another Buchanan County project, announcing \$398,000 in federal funding for a new fire truck for the Town of Grundy.

Speaking about the importance of supporting local emergency services, Warner reflected on an earlier effort to secure firefighting equipment for another community in Southwest Virginia.

"The other part of the project is a new fire truck," Warner said. "You know, we need that. I remember again, I hate to be like down memory lane all the time, but last, we used to have a delegate in southwest Virginia who represented Dublin and around the Volvo plant and Benny Keister."

"And he was on my butt like, on me like nothing to get them a fire truck," Warner continued. "So on that case, we had to go out and, frankly, find a used one that we could get for like 50 grand. And we got a fire truck."

Warner said the funding announced for Grundy would provide the town with a much newer and more capable vehicle.

"But that's not the kind of fire truck we're going to get to Grundy," Warner said. "Grundy is going to get a brand new, fancy, almost \$400,000 fire truck."

The fire truck will cost closer to \$500,000, and a matching grant will cover the remainder.

VDOT releases traffic alerts for Buchanan and nearby counties

By CHAD COOPER
coopkam@gmail.com

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 July 6 through July 12, 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)

Russell County

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)

Route 19/460 drainage structure repairs at Corsica Drive: Due to drainage structure repairs on Route 19/460 at Corsica Drive in Tazewell County, a lane closure will be in place from July 7 - 17. Be alert to signs and message boards in the area.

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. (Completion: Summer 2027)

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

Interstate 81

Nighttime bridge deck repairs northbound near mile marker 37 in Smyth County.

Nighttime bridge deck repairs southbound near mile marker 52, and Exits 50 and 47 in Smyth County.

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

A super load will be traveling northbound from Bristol to the West Virginia state line, July 6 - 11.

Interstate 77

Nighttime paving operations northbound between mile markers 46 and 48 in Bland County.

Daytime brush removal north and southbound between mile markers 44 and 67 in Bland County.

4-H Canning Day Camp teaches local youth a timeless skill

By CHAD COOPER
coopkam@gmail.com

For generations, canning has been a way of life in Buchanan County, helping families preserve the fruits and vegetables they grow throughout the summer. Next week, local youth will have the opportunity to learn those same traditions during the Buchanan County 4-H Canning Day Camp.

The free event will be held Wednesday, July 8, from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Buchanan County Extension Office, located at 4313 Slate Creek Road in Grundy.

Open to youth ages 9-18, the camp will provide hands-on instruction in the basics of home canning and food preservation. Participants will learn safe canning practices while discovering a skill that has long been part of Appalachian heritage.

Organizers hope the camp will not

only teach practical kitchen skills but also encourage young people to appreciate the value of preserving fresh foods and carrying on traditions that have been passed down through generations.

The event is sponsored by the Buchanan County Extension Office through Virginia Cooperative Extension and is free to attend.

Space is limited, and participants are encouraged to register in advance by calling the Buchanan County Extension Office at (276) 935-5093.

Virginia Cooperative Extension asks anyone needing accommodations because of a disability to contact the Wythe County Extension Office at (276) 223-6040 at least five days before the event.

The camp is one of several educational programs offered by Buchanan County 4-H throughout the year to help young people develop practical life skills while having fun in a hands-on learning environment.

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Local anglers
compete at nationals

By **CHAD COOPER**
coopkam@gmail.com

For Jackson Deel and Brody Deel, earning a chance to compete on one of the biggest stages in high school fishing was a reward for years of hard work and dedication.

The two Grundy anglers represented Buchanan County at the 17th Annual High School Fishing World Finals and National Championship, held June 23-27 on Lake Cumberland, where more than 400 two-person teams from across the United States and Canada gathered to compete for national titles, scholarships and prizes.

The local duo qualified for the prestigious event after winning a TBF High

School tournament at Lake Anna earlier this year, allowing them to test their skills against some of the nation's top young anglers.

While the tournament didn't unfold the way they had hoped, both anglers walked away with something they say is even more valuable — experience.

"The National tournament was a very fun experience and a great opportunity; competing on the national level for the first time was exciting and something I will never forget," Jackson Deel said. "Overall, our two practice days were good; we caught good fish and were feeling hopeful for the tournament. As the tournament approached, conditions changed, making

SEE **LOCAL ANGLERS** | 5B



Contributed photos
Brody Deel and Jackson Deel head across Lake Cumberland to begin competition during the 17th Annual High School Fishing World Finals and National Championship in Russell Springs, Ky. More than 400 two-person teams from across the United States and Canada competed in the five-day event.

Buchanan's best honored
during inaugural
BCSP banquet

By **CHAD COOPER**
coopkam@gmail.com

Buchanan County's finest student-athletes took one final bow before the start of a new era in county athletics as the Buchanan County Sports Podcast hosted its inaugural 2025-26 Sports Awards Banquet on June 27 at Grundy High School.

The evening brought together athletes, coaches, parents and community members to celebrate one of the most memorable years in Buchanan County sports history — the final athletic season for Grundy, Council, Hurley and Twin Valley High Schools before their consolidation into Southern Gap High School this fall.

More than 50 awards were presented throughout the evening, recognizing excellence across every varsity sport while also honoring perseverance, sportsmanship and dedication.

"The banquet went great, great turnout, great meal catered by Travis Fiser," Buchanan County Sports Podcast founder Michael Dotson said. "Some great speeches from both athletes and coaches."

The evening opened with an inspirational message from Pastor Eugene Whited of Blackey Baptist Church in Hurley. He encouraged athletes to reflect on more than wins and championships. Whited spoke about striving for personal records in athletics while also challenging those in attendance to consider their personal relationship with God and whether they had accepted Him as their Lord and Savior.

One of the night's most emotional moments came during the presentation of the Josh Keen Award for Perseverance, established in memory of the late Josh Keen.

SEE **BCSP BANQUET** | 2B



Keyston Hartford
Michael Dotson (left), founder of the Buchanan County Sports Podcast, and Tim O'Quinn (right) present Keyston Hartford with the Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year, Boys Indoor Track Athlete of the Year, Boys Outdoor Track Athlete of the Year and Male Athlete of the Year awards during the inaugural Buchanan County Sports Awards Banquet at Grundy High School.



Ella Rasnake
Michael Dotson (right), founder of the Buchanan County Sports Podcast, and Tim O'Quinn (left) present Ella Rasnake with the Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year, Girls Outdoor Track Athlete of the Year, Girls Basketball Most Valuable Player and Female Athlete of the Year awards during the inaugural Buchanan County Sports Awards Banquet at Grundy High School.

In The Locker
Room: A trade that
broke this Celtics
fan's heart

By **CHAD COOPER**
coopkam@gmail.com

Sports are the greatest reality show money can buy.

During my 44 years, I have been loyal to one team in each of the three major sports, both professionally and collegiately. I've had heroes I admired, rivals I loved to hate and villains who always seemed to stand in the way of another championship.

This past week, one of my favorite sports figures became the villain.

With one trade, Boston Celtics president of basketball operations Brad Stevens may have slammed the door on another championship banner hanging inside TD Garden for years to come.



CHAD COOPER
IN THE LOCKER ROOM

Stevens traded Jaylen Brown — an NBA MVP candidate, perennial All-Star and proven championship-caliber player alongside franchise cornerstone Jayson Tatum — not to a team in the Western Conference, but to the rival Philadelphia 76ers, instantly making them one of the favorites in the Eastern Conference.

Let's break it down.

Boston sent Brown, who finished sixth in NBA MVP voting last season while carrying the Celtics during Tatum's recovery from a torn ACL, to Philadelphia in exchange for Paul George, two first-round draft picks including an unprotected 2031 first-round pick, a 2028 first-round pick swap and two second-round selections.

On paper, that may sound like a haul.

To me, it isn't.

Philadelphia now pairs Brown with one of the league's elite young guards in Tyrese Maxey, former MVP Joel Embiid — when healthy, still one of the NBA's most dominant forces — and rising star VJ Edgecombe, one of last season's top rookies. The 76ers also added Dean Wade and Anfernee Simons, giving them even more perimeter shooting, and rumors continue to swirl that LeBron James could join the roster after reportedly informing the Los Angeles Lakers he will not return.

Meanwhile, Boston receives a 36-year-old Paul George.

When healthy, George can still score, defend multiple positions and stretch the floor. There's no questioning his talent.

The problem is staying healthy.

Over the last several years, injuries have become a recurring theme in George's career, and at this stage he simply isn't the player Brown is.

The draft compensation doesn't move the needle for me, either.

If Philadelphia becomes the contender many expect, those first-round picks will likely come near the end of the draft. The pick swap could actually work against Boston, and second-round picks rarely become franchise-changing players.

Reports also indicated Boston explored a deal for Giannis Antetokounmpo. That is a move I could have understood because it would have kept the Celtics firmly in championship contention. Rumors suggested the deal fell apart because Stevens was unwilling to include young rotational players Baylor Scheierman and Hugo Gonzalez along with Brown.

If that's true, I struggle to understand the logic.

Tatum is only 26 years old and remains one of the league's best players, but this trade feels like it pushes Boston at least two or three years away from seriously contending again. That's assuming another superstar even wants to come to Beantown, something that hasn't always been easy for the Celtics.

Stevens deserves plenty of credit for building a championship roster after selecting Brown and Tatum with back-to-back No. 3 overall picks. Tatum alone keeps Boston competitive, and Derrick White has resurrected his career in green while Payton Pritchard continues to develop into one of the league's best reserve guards.

But the supporting cast has changed dramatically.

Al Horford and Kristaps Porzingis, key contributors to Boston's 2024 NBA championship, are now with Golden State. Nikola Vucevic, acquired midway through last season, is gone. That leaves Neemias Queta, Luka Garza and newly signed Mitchell Robinson to anchor the frontcourt.

Back to Stevens.

SEE **LOCKER ROOM** | 5B

Buchanan County East All-Stars wrap up district tourney



Photos by Courtney Baldwin
Buchanan County East 12U All-Stars — Members of the Buchanan County East Little League 12U All-Star baseball team are, seated from left, Maddox Meadows, John Vencill and Eli Looney; middle row, Colton Clevinger, Grayson Rice and Lane Owens; and back row, Brantley Ward, Lincoln Baldwin, Ace Cochran, Jase Hardin, Hunter Deel, Jaxon Horn and Colten Crouse. The team was coached by Jason Ward, Matthew Crouse and Shannon Rice and finished 1-2 in district tournament play in late June.

By **CHAD COOPER**
coopkam@gmail.com

BuTwo Buchanan County East Little League baseball teams had the opportunity to represent their community on the diamond in late June as the league's 11U and 12U All-Star teams competed in district tournament play.

The 12U All-Stars finished the tournament with a 1-2 record while competing against some of the area's top teams.

Players on the 12U roster were Maddox Meadows, John Vencill, Eli Looney, Colton Clevinger, Grayson Rice, Lane

Owens, Brantley Ward, Lincoln Baldwin, Ace Cochran, Jase Hardin, Hunter Deel, Jaxon Horn and Colten Crouse.

The team was coached by Jason Ward, Matthew Crouse and Shannon Rice.

The Buchanan County East 11U All-Stars also proudly represented the league during district competition. Although the team finished 0-2, the tournament provided valuable experience for a young group of players as they competed against quality opponents.

Members of the 11U team were Jackson Dye, Jason Col-

SEE **ALL-STARs** | 5B

YMCA Basketball Camp returns July 29-31

By **CHAD COOPER**
coopkam@gmail.com

GRUNDY — Summer may mean a break from school, but for many young basketball players in Buchanan County, it's also a chance to improve their game before the next season tips off.

The Buchanan County YMCA is inviting boys and girls entering second through eighth grades to lace up their sneakers for its annual Co-Ed Youth Summer Basketball Camp, set for July 29-31.

The three-day camp, led by local coach Jory Rife, is designed to give young athletes a fun, positive environment where they can develop their basketball skills,

make new friends and build confidence both on and off the court.

Each day begins with a devotional before campers jump into instruction covering every aspect of the game, including ball handling, shooting, defensive pressure, layups, agility and game situations. Throughout the camp, participants will have opportunities to put what they've learned into action during daily competitions and games.

Whether a child is just beginning to learn the game or looking to prepare for the upcoming school basketball season, the camp offers instruction geared toward players of all skill levels.

The camp will run daily from 10 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. at the Buchanan County YMCA.

In addition to basketball instruction, every camper will receive a camp T-shirt, a pool pass and a snow cone pass. Awards will be presented each day, and one participant will be recognized as Camper of the Week, earning a complimentary one-year YMCA membership.

Registration is now underway. The cost is \$75 for YMCA members, with each additional sibling costing \$60. The fee for non-members is \$95, with additional siblings \$80 each.

Parents interested in registering their child can call the Buchanan County YMCA at (276) 935-8871.

BCSP BANQUET

FROM PAGE 1B

Josh's brother, Chance Keen, shared memories of his brother's life before Cheyenne Keen of Grundy and Josh Keen of Twin Valley were honored with the perseverance awards.

Dotson said both recipients delivered powerful acceptance speeches that resonated throughout the cafeteria.

The banquet also recognized Buchanan County's rich wrestling tradition.

Travis Fiser and Raymond Webb presented the Raymond Webb Award to Reid Stiltner of Grundy as the county's Most Dedicated Wrestler of the Year. The Greg Stiltner Award for Most Improved Wrestler went to Colton Clevinger of Grundy, while the prestigious F.D. Robertson Award for Outstanding Wrestler of the Year was presented to three-time VHSL state champion Talen Looney.

Sportsmanship was also celebrated through the Lloyd Combs Memorial Award.

Council basketball legend Neil Rasnake reflected on the life and legacy of Combs before Tim O'Quinn introduced boys recipient Ryder Anderson of Grundy. Council girls basketball coach Dan Periolo then introduced girls recipient Megan Hess of Council.

Following the special presentations, organizers recognized athletes from every sport.

Grundy and Council athletes dominated the cross country and track awards.

Keyston Hartford of Grundy earned Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year before also being recognized as Boys Indoor Track Athlete of the Year and Boys Outdoor Track Athlete of the Year. Council's Ella Rasnake was selected Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year and Girls Outdoor Track Athlete of the Year, while Grundy's Cheyenne Keen earned Girls Indoor Field Athlete of the Year. Destany Armendariz was named Girls Indoor Track Athlete of the Year, and Matthew Thompson and Emma Davis were honored as the Boys and Girls Outdoor Field Athletes of the Year.

On the basketball court, Ethan McClanahan capped his stellar senior season by earning Boys Basketball Most Valuable Player honors after leading Grundy to the final Black Diamond District championship. Kyle Hunt was selected Defensive Player of the Year, while Council standout Jacob Ray earned Offensive Player of the Year.

Girls basketball honors went to Grundy's Destany Armendariz as Defensive Player of the Year and Jade Vencill as Offensive Player of the Year. Rasnake added another award to her historic career by being named the Girls Basketball Most Valuable Player.

Grundy continued its dominance on the volleyball and softball courts.

Sophia Belcher earned Volleyball Hitter of the Year, Armendariz was selected Setter of the Year and Ryleigh Church received Volleyball Most Valuable Player honors.

Church later returned to the stage after being named Softball Most Valuable Player. Teammate Savannah Childress earned Softball Hitter of the Year, while Leah Rasnake received Softball Fielder of the Year honors.

Baseball awards also belonged to the Golden Wave. Jacob Smeltzer was named Fielder of the Year, Brody Ford earned Hitter of the Year honors and Ayden Whited was recognized as the sport's Most Valuable Player.

Hurley football players swept the offensive and defensive awards as Chase Baker was selected Defensive Player of the Year and Dylan Lester earned Offensive Player of the Year honors. Grundy's Trey Taylor rounded out the football awards by being named Most Valuable Player.

Additional honors included Hurley's Khloe Vance as

Girls Golfer of the Year and Grundy's Mason Boyd as Boys Golfer of the Year. Claire Griffey was recognized as Competitive Cheerleader of the Year, while Council's Maggie Rasnake earned Marching Band Performer of the Year.

Kate Bostic and Brayden Conaway, both of Grundy, received the girls and boys Tennis Player of the Year awards.

The evening concluded with the presentation of Buchanan County's highest individual honors.

Rasnake was named Female Athlete of the Year after an outstanding career that included success in cross country, indoor track, outdoor track and girls basketball, where she finished as Council High School's all-time leading scorer.

Hartford, who recently signed with the University of Virginia, was selected Male Athlete of the Year following another remarkable season in cross country and track and field.

Dotson said both athletes spoke about the people who helped shape their success.

"Both athletes spoke about being thankful for their families, teammates, coaches and most importantly God for allowing them to begin to compete and achieve all that they have," Dotson said. "We are extremely happy with the way everything turned out. We are looking forward to the second annual awards banquet at Southern Gap next year."

The success of the awards banquet is the latest milestone for the Buchanan County Sports Podcast, which has grown from a Facebook page into a leading source for local sports coverage. Dotson started the Buchanan County Sports Podcast Facebook page in 2017, often managing it by himself while balancing family responsibilities. During periods when his wife battled serious health issues following multiple strokes, updates became less frequent, but his commitment to promoting Buchanan County athletics never wavered.

Looking to expand coverage, Dotson reached out during the summer of 2025 for volunteers interested in launching a podcast. Tim O'Quinn and Chris Pack were the first to answer the call, and both played key roles in helping establish the show during its inaugural year. Greg "Pistol" Smith later joined the team as the podcast's cameraman while also assisting with coverage of local events. Together, the group attends games throughout the year, works with coaches to collect scores and statistics, and shares the stories of Buchanan County athletes.

Dotson said the group has developed more than just a working relationship over the past year, describing it as a brotherhood centered on serving the community. In addition to covering games and interviewing athletes, the podcast frequently highlights faith, with many student-athletes sharing how their relationship with God has influenced both their athletic careers and personal lives. The group hopes to continue honoring God while providing positive coverage of Buchanan County athletics for years to come.

Fans of Buchanan County Sports can watch full podcast episodes on YouTube by searching Buchanan County Sports Podcast, while the podcast's Facebook page offers breaking local sports news, scores, interviews and one of the area's largest collections of historic Buchanan County sports photographs, with team and individual images dating back more than 100 years.

2025-26 Buchanan County Sports Awards Banquet
Award Winners
Cross Country
Girls Runner of the Year — Ella Rasnake, Council
Boys Runner of the Year — Keyston Hartford, Grundy

Golf
Girls Golfer of the Year — Khloe Vance, Hurley
Boys Golfer of the Year — Mason Boyd, Grundy

Baseball
Fielder of the Year — Jacob Smeltzer, Grundy
Hitter of the Year — Brody Ford, Grundy
Most Valuable Player — Ayden Whited, Grundy

Volleyball
Hitter of the Year — Sophia Belcher, Grundy
Setter of the Year — Destany Armendariz, Grundy
Most Valuable Player — Ryleigh Church, Grundy

Competitive Cheer
Cheerleader of the Year — Claire Griffey, Grundy

Marching Band
Performer of the Year — Maggie Rasnake, Council

Softball
Fielder of the Year — Leah Rasnake, Grundy
Hitter of the Year — Savannah Childress, Grundy
Most Valuable Player — Ryleigh Church, Grundy

Football
Defensive Player of the Year — Chase Baker, Hurley
Offensive Player of the Year — Dylan Lester, Hurley
Most Valuable Player — Trey Taylor, Grundy
Josh Keen Award for Perseverance
Girls — Cheyenne Keen, Grundy
Boys — Josh Keen, Twin Valley

Indoor Track & Field
Girls Field Athlete of the Year — Cheyenne Keen, Grundy
Girls Track Athlete of the Year — Destany Armendariz, Grundy
Boys Track Athlete of the Year — Keyston Hartford, Grundy

Boys Basketball
Defensive Player of the Year — Kyle Hunt, Grundy
Offensive Player of the Year — Jacob Ray, Council
Most Valuable Player — Ethan McClanahan, Grundy

Girls Basketball
Defensive Player of the Year — Destany Armendariz, Grundy
Offensive Player of the Year — Jade Vencill, Grundy
Most Valuable Player — Ella Rasnake, Council

Wrestling
Raymond Webb Award (Most Dedicated Wrestler of the Year) — Reid Stiltner, Grundy
Greg Stiltner Award (Most Improved Wrestler of the Year) — Colton Clevinger, Grundy
F.D. Robertson Award (Outstanding Wrestler of the Year) — Talen Looney, Grundy

Outdoor Track & Field
Girls Field Athlete of the Year — Emma Davis, Grundy
Girls Track Athlete of the Year — Ella Rasnake, Council
Boys Field Athlete of the Year — Matthew Thompson, Grundy
Boys Track Athlete of the Year — Keyston Hartford, Grundy

Tennis
Girls Player of the Year — Kate Bostic, Grundy
Boys Player of the Year — Brayden Conaway, Grundy
Lloyd Combs Memorial Award for Sportsmanship
Girls — Megan Hess, Council
Boys — Ryder Anderson, Grundy

Overall Athletes of the Year
Girls Athlete of the Year — Ella Rasnake, Council
Boys Athlete of the Year — Keyston Hartford, Grundy



Michael Dotson (left), founder of the Buchanan County Sports Podcast, and Tim O'Quinn (right) present Brody Ford with the Baseball Hitter of the Year award during the inaugural Buchanan County Sports Awards Banquet at Grundy High School.



Michael Dotson (right), founder of the Buchanan County Sports Podcast, and Tim O'Quinn (left) present Jade Vencill with the Girls Basketball Offensive Player of the Year award during the inaugural Buchanan County Sports Awards Banquet at Grundy High School.



Michael Dotson (right), founder of the Buchanan County Sports Podcast, and Tim O'Quinn (left) present Chase Baker with the Football Defensive Player of the Year award during the inaugural Buchanan County Sports Awards Banquet at Grundy High School.



Michael Dotson (right), founder of the Buchanan County Sports Podcast, and Tim O'Quinn (left) present Dylan Lester with the Football Offensive Player of the Year award during the inaugural Buchanan County Sports Awards Banquet at Grundy High School.



Michael Dotson (far right), founder of the Buchanan County Sports Podcast, Tim O'Quinn (far left), and Grundy softball coach Christina Bane present Leah Rasnake with the Softball Fielder of the Year award during the inaugural Buchanan County Sports Awards Banquet at Grundy High School.



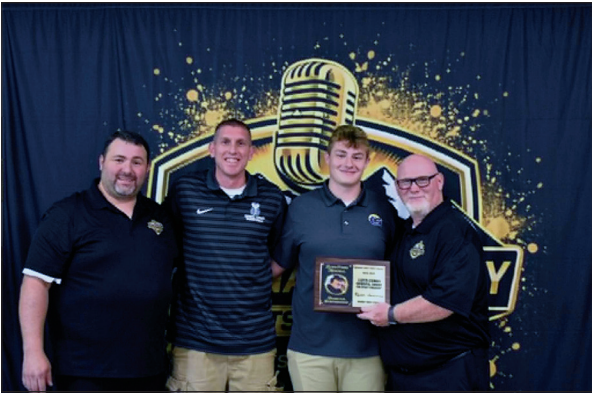
Michael Dotson (right), founder of the Buchanan County Sports Podcast, and Tim O'Quinn (left) present Maggie Rasnake with the Marching Band Performer of the Year award during the inaugural Buchanan County Sports Awards Banquet at Grundy High School.

BCSP BANQUET
FROM PAGE 2B

Photos courtesy of Buchanan County Sports



Talen Looney
Michael Dotson (left), founder of the Buchanan County Sports Podcast, and Tim O'Quinn (right) present Talen Looney with the F.D. Robertson Award as Outstanding Wrestler of the Year during the inaugural Buchanan County Sports Awards Banquet at Grundy High School.



Ryder Anderson
Michael Dotson (far left), founder of the Buchanan County Sports Podcast, Tim O'Quinn (far right), former Council High School coach and athletic director Neil Rasnake, who was a friend of Combs, present Ryder Anderson with the Lloyd Combs Memorial Award for Sportsmanship during the inaugural Buchanan County Sports Awards Banquet at Grundy High School.



Ryleigh Church
Michael Dotson (far left), founder of the Buchanan County Sports Podcast, Grundy head softball coach Christina Bane (second from left) and Tim O'Quinn (far right) present Ryleigh Church (second from right) with the Volleyball Most Valuable Player and Softball Most Valuable Player awards during the inaugural Buchanan County Sports Awards Banquet at Grundy High School.



Savannah Childress
Michael Dotson (far right), founder of the Buchanan County Sports Podcast, Grundy head coach Christina Bane (second from left) and Tim O'Quinn (far left) present Savannah Childress (second from left) with the Softball Hitter of the Year award during the inaugural Buchanan County Sports Awards Banquet at Grundy High School.



Trey Taylor
Michael Dotson (right), founder of the Buchanan County Sports Podcast, and Tim O'Quinn (left) present Trey Taylor with the Football Most Valuable Player award during the inaugural Buchanan County Sports Awards Banquet at Grundy High School.



Reid Stiltner
Michael Dotson (left), founder of the Buchanan County Sports Podcast, Grundy wrestling head coach Travis Fiser (far right), and Grundy wrestling coach Raymond Webb (second from right) present Reid Stiltner with the Raymond Webb Award as Most Dedicated Wrestler of the Year during the inaugural Buchanan County Sports Awards Banquet at Grundy High School.



Cheyenne Keen
Michael Dotson (far right), founder of the Buchanan County Sports Podcast, Grundy track coach Loni Webb, Chance Keen (second from right, brother of Josh Keen) and Tim O'Quinn (far left) present Cheyenne Keen with the Josh Keen Award for Perseverance and the Girls Indoor Field Athlete of the Year award during the inaugural Buchanan County Sports Awards Banquet at Grundy High School.



Claire Griffey
Michael Dotson (right), founder of the Buchanan County Sports Podcast, and Tim O'Quinn (left) present Claire Griffey with the Competitive Cheerleader of the Year award during the inaugural Buchanan County Sports Awards Banquet at Grundy High School.



Destany Armendariz
Michael Dotson (far left), founder of the Buchanan County Sports Podcast, Grundy girls head basketball coach Brian "Doc" Looney (second from left) and Tim O'Quinn (far right) present Destany Armendariz (second from left) with the Volleyball Setter of the Year, Girls Indoor Track Athlete of the Year and Girls Basketball Defensive Player of the Year awards during the inaugural Buchanan County Sports Awards Banquet at Grundy High School.



Ethan McClanahan
Michael Dotson (left), founder of the Buchanan County Sports Podcast, and Tim O'Quinn (right) present Ethan McClanahan with the Boys Basketball Most Valuable Player award during the inaugural Buchanan County Sports Awards Banquet at Grundy High School.



Jacob Smeltzer
Michael Dotson (right), founder of the Buchanan County Sports Podcast, and Tim O'Quinn (left) present Jacob Smeltzer with the Baseball Fielder of the Year award during the inaugural Buchanan County Sports Awards Banquet at Grundy High School.



Jacob Ray
Michael Dotson (left), founder of the Buchanan County Sports Podcast, and Tim O'Quinn (right) present Jacob Ray with the Boys Basketball Defensive Player of the Year award during the inaugural Buchanan County Sports Awards Banquet at Grundy High School.



Josh Keen
Michael Dotson (far right), founder of the Buchanan County Sports Podcast, Tim O'Quinn (far left) and Chance Keen (second to right, brother of Josh Keen) present Josh Keen of Twin Valley with the Josh Keen Award for Perseverance during the inaugural Buchanan County Sports Awards Banquet at Grundy High School.



Khloe Vance
Michael Dotson (left), founder of the Buchanan County Sports Podcast, and Tim O'Quinn (right) present Khloe Vance with the Girls Golfer of the Year award during the inaugural Buchanan County Sports Awards Banquet at Grundy High School.



Kyle Hunt
Michael Dotson (left), founder of the Buchanan County Sports Podcast, and Tim O'Quinn (right) present Kyle Hunt with the Boys Basketball Defensive Player of the Year award during the inaugural Buchanan County Sports Awards Banquet at Grundy High School.



Mason Boyd
Michael Dotson (left), founder of the Buchanan County Sports Podcast, and Tim O'Quinn (right) present Mason Boyd with the Boys Golfer of the Year award during the inaugural Buchanan County Sports Awards Banquet at Grundy High School.



Matthew Thompson
Michael Dotson (left), founder of the Buchanan County Sports Podcast, and Tim O'Quinn (right) present Matthew Thompson with the Boys Outdoor Field Athlete of the Year award during the inaugural Buchanan County Sports Awards Banquet at Grundy High School.



Megan Hess
Michael Dotson (far right), founder of the Buchanan County Sports Podcast, Dan Perolio (second from left), coach Neil Rasnake (second from right) and Tim O'Quinn (far left) present Megan Hess with the Lloyd Combs Memorial Award for Sportsmanship during the inaugural Buchanan County Sports Awards Banquet at Grundy High School.

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www.VirginiaMountaineer.com

SGHS volleyball program announces inaugural schedule

By **CHAD COOPER**
coopkam@gmail.com

Southern Gap High School has unveiled the inaugural schedule for its volleyball program, marking another milestone as the Eagles prepare to begin competition during the school’s first year.

The Eagles will open the 2026 season on Aug. 25 with a road match against Wise Central before making their home debut Aug. 31 against Honaker.

Southern Gap’s varsity squad will also compete in the Rebel Classic at Patrick Henry on Sept. 5, while the middle school, junior varsity and varsity teams will play a full slate of Southwest Virginia opponents throughout the fall.

The inaugural schedule includes home-and-home matchups with Wise Central, Honaker, Graham, Lebanon, Marion, Richlands, Tazewell and Virginia High. The Eagles will also face Shelby Valley twice, with junior varsity and varsity teams competing in those contests.

Earlier this summer, Southern Gap announced volleyball tryouts will be held Aug. 3-5 at the Riverview Elementary/Middle School gym. Athletes must have a current Virginia High School League physical and complete all required paperwork before participating.

2026 Southern Gap Eagles Volleyball Schedule					
Date.....	Opponent	Site.....	Teams		
Aug. 25 ...	Wise Central	Away	MS, JV, V		
Aug. 31 ...	Honaker.....	Home.....	MS, JV, V		
Sept. 1 ...	Wise Central	Home.....	MS, JV, V		
Sept. 3 ...	Shelby Valley	Home.....	JV, V		
Sept. 5 ...	Rebel Classic (Patrick Henry)....	Patrick Henry Varsity			
Sept. 8 ...	Virginia High.....	Away	MS, JV, V		
Sept. 10 ...	Graham	Away	MS, JV, V		
Sept. 15 ...	Honaker.....	Away	MS, JV, V		
Sept. 17 ...	Lebanon.....	Home.....	MS, JV, V		
Sept. 21 ...	Shelby Valley	Away	JV, V		
Sept. 22 ...	Tazewell.....	Home.....	MS, JV, V		
Sept. 24 ...	Richlands	Away	MS, JV, V		
Sept. 29 ...	Marion.....	Away	MS, JV, V		
Oct. 1 ...	Graham	Home.....	MS, JV, V		
Oct. 3 ...	Wise Central	Away	MS only		
Oct. 6 ...	Lebanon.....	Away	MS, JV, V		
Oct. 13 ...	Virginia High.....	Home.....	MS, JV, V		
Oct. 15 ...	Marion.....	Home.....	MS, JV, V		
Oct. 20 ...	Richlands	Home.....	MS, JV, V		
Oct. 22 ...	Tazewell.....	Away	MS, JV, V		

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276-935-5355

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TRUSTEE’S SALE
1016 SAINT CLAIR ST
OAKWOOD, VA 24631

In execution of the Deed of Trust in the original principal amount of \$232,323.00, dated May 13, 2025, and recorded as Instrument Number 250000500 in Buchanan County land records, the appointed Substitute Trustee will offer for sale at public auction on the front steps of the Buchanan County Circuit Courthouse, Grundy, VA 24614 on August 05, 2026 at 4:55 PM, the property described in said deed of trust, located at the above address and more particularly described

LEGAL NOTICES

as follows:
THAT CERTAIN TRACT OR PARCEL OF REAL ESTATE, WITH ALL IMPROVEMENTS THEREON, BEING MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS: TRACT NO. 1. MAP NO.: 2HH055036; ACCOUNT NUMBER: 15298 SITUATE ON LEVISA RIVER, AT THE MOUTH OF RICHMOND BRANCH, AND LOCATED APPROXIMATELY ONE (1) MILE EAST OF KEEN MOUNTAIN, ON OLD U.S. ROUTE 460, IN THE GARDEN DISTRICT OF BUCHANAN COUNTY, VIRGINIA, REFERRED TO AS CONTAINING 0.40 ACRE, MORE OR LESS, AND BEING DE-

LEGAL NOTICES

SCRIBED AS FOLLOWS: “BEGINNING AT THE CENTER OF A DRAIN PIPE HEAD IN A WALL AT THE LOWER EDGE OF THE WEST RIGHT OF WAY LINE OF THE STATE HIGHWAY; THENCE WITH SAID RIGHT OF WAY LINE S. 36° 00’ E. 222 FEET TO A STAKE IN SAID RIGHT OF WAY LINE; THENCE LEAVING SAID HIGHWAY RIGHT OF WAY S. 75° 00’ W. 197 FEET TO A LARGE ROCK; THENCE N. 19° 00’ W. 178.00 FEET TO A STAKE; THENCE N. 70° 00’ E. 132.00 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING” PROPERTY ADDRESS: 1016 ST CLAIR ST OAKWOOD, VIRGINIA 24631 BEING THE SAME PROPERTY ACQUIRED BY JOHN SCOTT BLILEY AND AMBER LAVONNE BLILEY FROM JOE FRANKLIN ST. CLAIR AND CATHERINE BUCHANAN ST. CLAIR BY DEED OF EVEN DATE AND RECORDED HERewith IN THE CIRCUIT COURT CLERK’S OFFICE OF BUCHANAN COUNTY, VIRGINIA. The property and improvements will be sold in “as is” physical condition without warranty of any kind. TERMS OF SALE: A non-refundable bidder’s deposit of 10% of the sale price or 10% of the original principal amount of the subject Deed of Trust, whichever is lower, by cashier’s or certified check required at time of sale except for the party secured by the Deed of Trust. Risk of loss on purchaser from date and time of auction. Balance of the purchase price must be paid

LEGAL NOTICES

by cashier’s check within 15 days from sale date. Except for Virginia Grantor tax, all settlement costs and expenses are purchaser’s responsibility. Taxes are pro-rated to the date of sale. Purchaser is responsible for obtaining possession of the property. If purchaser defaults, deposit may be forfeited and property resold at the risk and cost of the defaulting purchaser who shall be liable for any deficiency in the purchase price and all costs, expenses and attorney’s fees of both sales. If Trustee does not convey title for any reason, purchaser’s sole remedy is return of deposit without interest. This sale is subject to post-sale audit of the status of the loan secured by the Deed of Trust including but not limited to determining whether prior to sale a bankruptcy was filed, a forbearance, repayment or other agreement was entered into or the loan was reinstated or paid off; in any such event this sale shall be null and void and purchaser’s sole remedy shall be return of deposit without interest. This communication is from a debt collector and is an attempt to collect a debt and any information obtained will be used for that purpose. SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEE: RAS Trustee Services, LLC, 101 North Lynnhaven Road, Suite 104, Virginia Beach, Virginia 23452 FOR INFORMATION CONTACT: RAS Trustee Services, LLC,

LEGAL NOTICES

Substitute Trustee
c/o Robertson, Anschutz, Schneid, Crane & Partners, PLLC
11350 McCormick Road, Executive Plaza I, Suite 302
Hunt Valley, Maryland 21031
(844) 442-2150
(470) 321-7112
VAM-07-02,09;2026

ORDER OF PUBLICATION
COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
Va. Code §§1-211.1;
8.01-316.317, 20-104
Case No. CL26-550

LEGAL NOTICES

Buchanan County Circuit Court 1012 Walnut Street/PO Box 929 Grundy, VA 24614.
Nichole Elaine Palmer v.
Richard Arthur Palmer
The object of this suit is to: Obtain a divorce on the grounds of one-year separation.
It is ORDERED that Richard Arthur Palmer appear at the above-named court and protect his interests on or before August 4, 2026 at 9:00 a.m.
VM-6-25, 7-2,9,16;2026

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Please take notice that the Buchanan County Board of Supervisors will hold a public hearing at **6:15 o’clock p.m. on the 3rd day of August, 2026**, in the Board of Supervisors’ Meeting Room on the third floor of the Buchanan County Government Center, 4447 Slate Creek Road, Grundy, Virginia. The purpose of that hearing will be to entertain and receive public comment on the proposed adoption of an ordinance regarding Chapter 37, Land Use Permits of the Buchanan County Code to include Land Use Permits; and renaming the title of Chapter 37 from Gasline Pipelines to Land Use Permits. This ordinance was adopted on an emergency basis on June 8, 2026. The public hearing is to determine whether to adopt the ordinance on a permanent basis.

Any interested person is invited to appear and make public comment concerning such proposed ordinance in the manner set forth in this Notice. The proposed Ordinance is available upon request at the Buchanan County Administrator’s Office on the third floor of the Buchanan County Government Center, 4447 Slate Creek Road in Grundy, Virginia. Please contact Sandy Stiltnier, 276-935-6508 to make arrangement to receive a copy of the ordinance.

PLEASE CONDUCT YOURSELF ACCORDINGLY.

Robert Craig Horn, County Administrator of Buchanan County, Virginia

Notice or Advertisement
Returning Substitute In-service
2026-2027

Buchanan County Public Schools has scheduled an in-service training for returning substitute teachers, instructional aides, cafeteria staff, custodial staff, nurses, coaching staff, and volunteers. If you would like to remain on the 2026-2027 substitute, coach, and volunteer list, you must attend the in-service scheduled for July 28, 2026 at 9:00 a.m. at Riverview Elementary/Middle School. This in-service is required for those who are returning substitutes, coaches, and volunteers.

The pay scale for substitute personnel is as follows:

- Bachelor’s or Master’s Degree Teacher possessing a valid Collegiate Professional license and working as a long-term substitute for an extended period of time- \$172.00 per day.
- Bachelor’s or Master’s Degree Substitute Teacher not working as a long- term substitute but working periodically for different teachers- \$107.25 per day.
- Associate Degree -two (2) years of college -64 semester hours -96 quarter hours \$98.25 per day.
- High School Graduate or Equivalent -\$95.78 per day.
- Cafeteria of Custodial Substitute -\$12.77 per hour.

****Please be advised that all substitute teachers will be paid on the high school pay scale until an official transcript is sent to Becky Harrison at the Buchanan County School Board Office.**
If you have any questions, please contact Becky Harrison, Human Resource Director, at 276935-4551.

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.

Notice or Advertisement
BCPS New Policy: Anyone attending the new in-service will be responsible for paying all in-service fees the day of the in-service.

Buchanan County Public Schools has scheduled in-service training for **new substitute** teachers, instructional aides, cafeteria staff, custodial staff, coaching staff, and volunteers. Please attend the in-service scheduled for July 29, 2026 at 8:30 a.m. at the Buchanan County School Board Office. **This in-service is required for those who are new substitutes teachers, instructional aides, cafeteria, custodial, coaching staff and volunteers.**

The following items will be needed for this in-service:

- \$27.00 Live Scan Fingerprint -You must go to the Buchanan County Sheriff’s Office to get this scan and bring the scan with you on the in-service day. The fee for this service is payable to Buchanan County Public Schools.
- TB Screening -This service can be performed at the Buchanan County Health Department. The fee for this service is \$17.05 payable to the Buchanan-County Health Department.
- \$96.00 Lab Service (drug screen) payable to Buchanan County Public Schools.
- \$12.30 Central Registry Background Search payable to Buchanan County Schools.
- Two (2) proofs of identification (Driver’s License and Social Security Card).
- Direct Deposit information (voided check).
- All fees will need to be paid the day of the in-service with cash. The total amount of fees payable to BCPS is \$135.30 (exact cash and change).
- If you have a college degree please bring an official transcript the day of the in-service.
- Please note: The next in-service training for new substitutes will be in January 2027.

The pay scale for a substitute personnel is as follows:

- Bachelor’s or Master’s Degree Teacher possessing a valid Collegiate Professional license and working as a long-term substitute for an extended period of time- \$172.00 per day.
- Bachelor’s or Master’s Degree Substitute Teacher not working as a long- term substitute but working periodically for different teachers- \$107.25 per day.
- Associate Degree -two (2) years of college -64 semester hours -96 quarter hours -\$98.25 perday.
- High School Graduate or Equivalent -\$95.78 per day.
- Cafeteria of Custodial Substitute -\$12.77 per hour.

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If you have any questions, please contact Becky Harrison, Human Resource Director at 276-935-4551.

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.



ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS – SNOW REMOVAL

The Virginia Department of Transportation invites heavy equipment owners to sign up for the rental of their equipment with operators for SNOW & ICE REMOVAL purposes in Lebanon Residency which includes the counties of Buchanan, Russell, Tazewell, during the winter of 2026-2027. Price per hour shall include operators, fuel, tire chains, supplies, required insurance and any other incidentals necessary for snow removal operations. VDOT will need single axle and tandem dump trucks with plow and spreaders. Along with a limited number of 4x4 pickups with plows and spreaders. All equipment should be equipped for night work and be in good mechanical condition to ensure a safe and dependable 24/7 operation. All equipment must have current registration, tags, certificate of insurance and inspection sticker at the time of contract submittal. Equipment must also pass a VDOT equipment inspection. VDOT reserves the right to determine acceptability of equipment size and condition for the task. Contractors submitting the lowest responsive and responsible bids will be awarded contracts for “on-call” services as deemed necessary by VDOT. Certified Small Business/micro vendor preferred, registered eVA vendor required. VDOT will be paying a \$2,000 Signing Bonus, and Minimum Guaranteed Payment on awarded contracts. To be eligible for the Signing Bonus all contract requirements shall be submitted in Plow4VA by September 1, 2026.

M7B Contract Snow Meeting will be held: **Wednesday, July 22, 2026 @ 10:00 a.m. Location-Town of Lebanon Parks & Recreation, Clinch Mountain Room.** All interested contractors are encouraged to attend this meeting.

Snow Removal Equipment Packages, which includes contract requirements, may be obtained on eVA after July 10, 2026, at <http://eva.state.va.us/vendors>, and contracts must be submitted online through <https://plow4va.vdot.virginia.gov>
EEO/AA Employer

CLASSIFIEDS

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Breaks Interstate Park Commission will hold a regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, July 16 at Breaks Park Conference Center, 627 Commission Circle in Breaks, VA 24607. The meeting will begin at 11:00 a.m.

Authorized by: Grondall Potter,
Commission Chairman

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Please take notice that the Buchanan County Board of Supervisors will hold a public hearing at 6:45 o'clock p.m. on the 3rd day of August, 2026, in the Board of Supervisors' Meeting Room on the third floor of the Buchanan County Government Center, 4447 Slate Creek Road, Grundy, Virginia. The purpose of that hearing will be to entertain and receive public comment on the proposed adoption of an ordinance regarding Chapter 88, Taxation of the Buchanan County Code to amend section 88-32, Returns. This ordinance was adopted on an emergency basis on June 8, 2026. The public hearing is to determine whether to adopt the ordinance on a permanent basis.

Any interested person is invited to appear and make public comment concerning such proposed ordinance in the manner set forth in this Notice. The proposed Ordinance is available upon request at the Buchanan County Administrator's Office on the third floor of the Buchanan County Government Center, 4447 Slate Creek Road in Grundy, Virginia. Please contact Sandy Stiltner, 276-935-6508 to make arrangement to receive a copy of the ordinance.

PLEASE CONDUCT YOURSELF ACCORDINGLY.

Robert Craig Horn, County Administrator of Buchanan County, Virginia

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Please take notice that the Buchanan County Board of Supervisors will hold a public hearing at 6:20 o'clock p.m. on the 3rd day of August, 2026, in the Board of Supervisors' Meeting Room on the third floor of the Buchanan County Government Center, 4447 Slate Creek Road, Grundy, Virginia. The purpose of that hearing will be to entertain and receive public comment on the proposed adoption of an ordinance regarding Chapter 90, Vehicles and Traffic of the Buchanan County Code prohibiting the use of heavy construction equipment to include, but not limited to heavy trucks and equipment with metal tracks on county roads. This ordinance was adopted on an emergency basis on June 8, 2026. The public hearing is to determine whether to adopt the ordinance on a permanent basis.

Any interested person is invited to appear and make public comment concerning such proposed ordinance in the manner set forth in this Notice. The proposed Ordinance is available upon request at the Buchanan County Administrator's Office on the third floor of the Buchanan County Government Center, 4447 Slate Creek Road in Grundy, Virginia. Please contact Sandy Stiltner, 276-935-6508 to make arrangement to receive a copy of the ordinance.

PLEASE CONDUCT YOURSELF ACCORDINGLY.

Robert Craig Horn, County Administrator of Buchanan County, Virginia

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Please take notice that the Buchanan County Board of Supervisors will hold a public hearing at 6:30 o'clock p.m. on the 3rd day of August 2026, in the Board of Supervisors' Meeting Room on the third floor of the Buchanan County Government Center, 4447 Slate Creek Road, Grundy, Virginia. The purpose of that hearing will be to entertain and receive public comment on the proposed adoption of an ordinance entitled: "An Ordinance to Establish Payment of a One-Time 2.0 percent bonus of base salary for Buchanan County Department of Social Service (LDSS) for LDSS employees." Said bonuses are being paid from State-Supported Local Employee Bonus in the Personnel & Fringe account for FY 26. The funding for the bonus is from a combination of funds from the Commonwealth of Virginia. This ordinance was adopted on an emergency basis on June 8, 2026. The Public Hearing is to consider adopting this ordinance on a permanent basis. However, the bonus is only a one-time bonus pursuant to the ordinance and the law of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The bonus must be paid and reimbursed in FY 2025 2026. A local ordinance regarding payment of bonuses must be in place per the Code of Virginia section 15.2-1508 to provide for a bonus. The funding for the bonus is a combination of funds from the Commonwealth of Virginia in the amount of \$68,229.65 and a local contribution from Buchanan County, Virginia in the amount of \$4,295.00.

§ 15.2-1508. BONUSES FOR EMPLOYEES OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS. Notwithstanding any contrary provision of law, general or special, the governing body of any locality may provide for payment of monetary bonuses to its officers and employees. The payment of a bonus shall be authorized by ordinance.

Any interested person is invited to appear and make public comment concerning such proposed ordinance in the manner set forth in this Notice. The proposed Ordinance is available upon request at the Buchanan County Administrator's Office on the third floor of the Buchanan County Government Center, 4447 Slate Creek Road in Grundy, Virginia. Please contact Sandy Stiltner, 276-935-6508 to make arrangement to receive a copy of the ordinance.

PLEASE CONDUCT YOURSELF ACCORDINGLY.

Robert Craig Horn, County Administrator of Buchanan County, Virginia

ALL STARS

FROM PAGE 1B

ley, Chanan Cooper, Aden Boyd, Dalton Hockman, Ian Viers, Walker Yates, Mason Smith, Eli Cochran, Ledger Baker, Hunter Cooper, Easton Stevens and Noah Horn.

The 11U team was coached by Tyler Cooper, Charlie Cochran, Chris Smith and Chad Cooper.



Photos by Courtney Baldwin

Buchanan County East 11U All-Stars — Members of the Buchanan County East Little League 11U All-Star baseball team are, front row from left, Hunter Cooper, Easton Stevens and Noah Horn; and back row, Jackson Dye, Jason Colley, Chanan Cooper, Aiden Boyd, Dalton Hockman, Ian Viers, Walker Yates, Mason Smith, Eli Cochran and Ledger Baker. The team represented Buchanan County East in district tournament play in late June.

LOCAL ANGLERS

FROM PAGE 1B



Contributed photos

Brody Deel and Jackson Deel work to land a fish during the 17th Annual High School Fishing World Finals and National Championship on Lake Cumberland in Russell Springs, Ky. The Buchanan County duo gained valuable experience competing against some of the nation's top high school anglers.

fishing tough, and we were not catching the fish we had during practice. We made several adjustments in our strategy but still were not able to catch the quality of fish we needed. We came away with the experience of a lifetime and some new techniques to work on for future tournaments. I want to thank

my sponsors and my family for making this experience possible. I would also like to thank my boat captain, who happens to be my uncle."

The pair found promising fish during practice, but changing conditions and heavy fishing pressure during competition made Lake Cumberland a much different challenge. With hundreds of boats spread across the lake, every bite became difficult to earn.

Brody Deel said simply qualifying for the national championship was an achievement that few high school anglers ever experience.

"We just competed at the National High School Fishing Championship after earning our spot through a great season. While we didn't come home with a win, just qual-

ifying to compete against some of the best high school anglers in the country was an incredible accomplishment," Brody Deel said. "The fishing was incredibly tough with more than 400 boats on the water; the lake saw an enormous amount of fishing pressure, which made finding and catching fish much more challenging. We made lifelong memories, met anglers from across the nation, learned so much, and represented our community with pride. We also wanted to say thanks to our family and sponsors. I would also like to thank our boat captain, who happens to be my dad. I am very excited and looking forward to fishing for Southern Gap High School."

Their trip to the national championship was

made possible through the support of several local businesses, including D. Deel Construction, JDD Enterprises, Twin Enterprises, TruPoint Bank, Medical Park Pharmacy, Morristown Marine, Big Sandy Soil and Water Conservation District, and West End Pharmacy.

The tournament awarded more than \$1 million in scholarships and prizes and attracted thousands of anglers, families and spectators to Lake Cumberland throughout the week.

For Brody, the experience has already sparked excitement for the future. With Southern Gap High School opening its doors this fall, he is eager to represent the Eagles on the water and build on everything he and Jackson learned while competing against the nation's best.

IN THE LOCKER ROOM

FROM PAGE 1B

I've admired him since his remarkable run at Butler, where he nearly knocked off my Duke Blue Devils in the NCAA championship game. Years later, I had the opportunity to attend a coaching clinic in Myrtle Beach where Stevens shared the stage with Bobby Knight and Jim Boeheim. Then he became Boston's head coach before moving into the front office.

He was someone I respected professionally. Maybe that's why this trade stings so much. It reminds us that even the brightest basketball minds can make decisions that leave an entire fan base scratching its head.

I've survived the post-Larry Bird years before, so I'll survive this one too. Changing gears, few sporting traditions are as American as the Nathan's Famous Hot Dog Eating Contest held every Fourth of July on Coney Island in New York.

The greatest competitive eater of all time, Joey Chestnut, reclaimed his throne by winning his record 18th Mustard Belt after devouring 66 hot dogs. On the women's side, Miki Sudo captured another title by consuming 38.75 hot dogs.

Finally, I want to give a huge shoutout to the Knox Creek Volunteer Fire Department, Russell Prater Fire & Rescue, the Grundy Volunteer Fire Department and the Town of Grundy for hosting outstanding Fourth of July celebrations across Buchanan County this past week.

The fireworks were spectacular, the crowds were tremendous, and the events were another reminder of what makes our communities special.

Happy 250th birthday, America.

INDEPENDENCE DAY

FROM PAGE 1B

kept the crowd entertained as they waited for nightfall. The band’s energetic performance helped create a festive atmosphere as neighbors visited with one another and children played nearby.

When darkness finally arrived, all eyes turned toward the sky as the annual fireworks display began. Brilliant colors lit up the mountains surrounding Grundy, drawing smiles, cheers and excitement from spectators throughout the show.

The loudest reaction came after the grand finale, when the final burst of fireworks echoed through the valley, and the crowd responded with a thunderous round of applause in appreciation of another memorable display.



CHAD COOPER | Virginia Mountaineer

A group of young attendees smiles for a photo while enjoying Grundy’s annual Independence Day celebration on July 3.



CHAD COOPER | Virginia Mountaineer

Friends gather outside the Grundy Town Center to enjoy live music and fellowship as they wait for the annual Independence Day fireworks display to begin.



CHAD COOPER | Virginia Mountaineer

Jack McCoy, dressed as Uncle Sam, poses for a photo with a group of young attendees during Grundy’s Independence Day celebration Friday evening.

Prater Fire & Rescue fireworks celebration draws large crowd

By CHAD COOPER
coopkam@gmail.com

Despite intense heat, families gathered at Southern Gap on July 2 for Prater Fire & Rescue’s annual Independence Day fireworks celebration.

With temperatures in the 90s, residents from across Buchanan County came in larger numbers than expected, enjoying the evening with friends, good food, live music, and creating memories before the fireworks lit up the sky. Children were everywhere, laughing and splashing on

water inflatables, which became one of the event’s main highlights as kids sought relief from the heat. Others painted colorful chalk drawings on sidewalks while families relaxed in lawn chairs or blankets nearby.

Food vendors saw heavy traffic from opening, with long lines and some selling out of popular items before the night ended. As night fell, excitement grew as fireworks exploded overhead, captivating all ages and lighting up the sky over Southern Gap, culminating in loud applause for another successful community event.



CHAD COOPER | Virginia Mountaineer

Children cool off in the water inflatables during Prater Fire & Rescue’s annual Independence Day celebration at Southern Gap on July 2. The popular attraction helped youngsters beat the summer heat while families enjoyed an evening of music, food and fireworks.



CHAD COOPER | Virginia Mountaineer

Long lines formed at food vendors throughout the evening as a larger-than-expected crowd attended Prater Fire & Rescue’s annual Independence Day celebration at Southern Gap. Several vendors sold out of some menu items before the night concluded.

GUN LAWS

FROM PAGE 1B

from residents regarding several new firearm laws scheduled to take effect in Virginia today, including House Bill 217, Senate Bill 749, and Senate Bill 727,” Boyd said.

Boyd said he intentionally waited until after July 1 to address the issue publicly because of the evolving legal challenges.

“Over the past several weeks, I intentionally chose not to issue a public statement before July 1. That decision was deliberate. Given the number of legal challenges filed and the rapidly changing status of the litigation, I believed it was more responsible to allow the judicial process to develop rather than make premature statements before the courts had an opportunity to act. Residents deserve decisions based on facts and legal rulings, not speculation or political reactions.”

The sheriff said it is not the role of law enforcement to determine whether laws are constitutional.

“As I have stated previously, law enforcement officers do not determine whether a law is constitutional. That responsibility rests with the judicial branch. Our role is to uphold and enforce the law while exercising sound judgment, fairness, and discretion in carrying out our duties.”

Boyd said his office is aware of the legal challenges and believes the courts should have an opportunity to rule before law-abiding citizens face criminal enforcement under statutes still under judicial review.

“We are aware that multiple legal challenges have been filed, including an injunction that has temporarily prevented these laws from taking effect while the courts consider their constitutionality. I share many of the concerns that have been expressed regarding the constitutional implications of these laws and believe the judicial process should be allowed to run its course before otherwise law-abiding citizens are subjected to criminal enforcement under statutes that remain under judicial review.”

Because of that uncertainty, Boyd said he has directed deputies not to pursue enforcement under the new laws while the litigation continues.

“Accordingly, I have directed that the Buchanan County Sheriff’s Office will exercise lawful discretion and will not pursue enforcement actions under these new gun laws while the courts consider the pending constitutional challenges. I believe it is prudent to allow the judicial process to proceed and to receive clear legal guidance from the courts regarding the validity and constitutionality of these statutes before determining any long-term course of action.”

Boyd said the sheriff’s office will continue monitoring the court proceedings and adjust its approach as legal guidance becomes available.

“The Buchanan County Sheriff’s Office will continue to monitor ongoing litigation and carefully review any decisions issued by the courts. We look forward to receiving clear legal guidance regarding these laws and their constitutionality.”

He concluded by reaffirming his commitment to the people of Buchanan County.

“I remain committed to serving the citizens of Buchanan County with professionalism, common sense, and respect for the constitutional rights of our citizens.”

The Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution protects the right of individuals to keep and bear arms, and the ongoing court cases will determine how Virginia’s new firearm restrictions are ultimately implemented. Until those legal questions are resolved, Boyd said the Buchanan County Sheriff’s Office will continue to follow the judicial process while exercising lawful discretion in carrying out its duties.

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