

Garrett Edward Harris

GARRETT EDWARD HARRIS, age 73, of the Stinson Ridge section of Rowe, Virginia passed away Wednesday (August 12, 2026) at his home. Born February 16, 1953 in Buchanan County, Virginia, he was a son of the late Dexter Edward and Elsie Mae McGlothlin Harris. A lifelong resident of the area, he was a 1971 graduate of Council High School. He was a disabled coal miner and had formerly been employed by Island Creek Coal Company. A member of the UMWA, he enjoyed fishing and hunting.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his wife, Rita Sue Lester Harris.

Survivors include three siblings, Yvonne Tiller and husband, James, Lucy Jackson and husband, Paul, and Alvin Harris; special friend,

Steve Sauls; several nieces and nephews also survive.

Funeral services were 7:00 PM Saturday in the Honaker Funeral Home Chapel, Honaker, Virginia with Rev. James Tiller and Rev. Jeff Ball officiating. Graveside services were conducted at 11:00 AM Sunday at the Harris Cemetery on Council Mountain Road. Those who attended assembled at the cemetery.

UMWA honors will be conducted by Sub 28 Chaplain Corps.

Pallbearers were Rodney Harris, Randy Harris, Steve Sauls, Christopher Jackson, Craig Tiller, Jeffery Hess.

The family received friends after 6:00 PM Saturday at the funeral home.

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



Courthouse News

By **CHAD COOPER**
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Marriage licenses
Vincent McDonald McClean Jr., 27, and Brooke Mariah Dunsmore, 30, both of Sparta, Kentucky, on August 1, 2026.

Deeds recorded
July 28 – Monroe Matney, ETAL, to Barry Matney, ETAL, 72.154 acres Guesses Fork, Knox Creek, deed of gift.
July 28 – Dennis Alan Ramey, ETAL, to Baker Motorsports and Fab LLC., two tracts Town of Grundy, \$55,000.00.
July 29 – Mary Ellen Stiltner, ETAL, to Logan A. Hopkins, ETAL, tract Long Bottom, Slate Creek, Levisa River, \$50,000.00.
July 30 – Jarrod Craig Ratliff, to Evans Ratliff, ETAL, tract Buchanan County, deed of gift.
July 30 – Fredia Ann Ruble, to Board of Supervisors, 0.57 acre Levisa Fork River, Rocklick District, \$75,000.00.
July 30 – Jonathan David Hughes, to Frieda Ann Ruble, 0.4 acre Bull Creek, Levisa River, Rock Lick District, \$125,000.00.
July 30 – Eulas E. Perkins, ETAL, to Eulas E. Perkins, ETAL, two tracts Moody Branch, Levisa River, Garden District, deed of gift.
July 31 – Tina S. Owen, to James C. Stewert Jr., 1/2 interest to Minerals Lot No. 51, 52, 53, 54 or Caroline Gregory Subdivision, deed of gift.
July 31 – Tina S. Owen, to Tina S. Owens, 1/2 interest to Minerals Lot No. 51, 52, 53, 54 or Caroline Gregory Subdivision, deed of gift.

Mary Sue Dean

Mary Sue Dean, age 92, of Richlands, VA passed away Saturday, August 8, 2026, at her home following a brief illness.

Born in Ashland, WV. She was the daughter of the late Robert Stephen Dean and Mary (Hazel) Hall Dean. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her paternal grandparents James M. & Albert Liddle Dean; maternal grandparents Walter & Mary Sue Ratliff Hall and adopted son Gary Allen Lakey.

Ms. Dean was a graduate of Radford University. She retired from Richlands High School in 1997 after 41 years of teaching with the last 29 years at Richlands High School.

Ms. Dean was dearly loved by all her former students and co-workers. She was a member of the Cedar Bluff United Methodist Church and wanted in lieu of flowers donations

be made in her memory to “In his Hand Baby Mission”, C/O Cedar Bluff United Methodist Church P.O. Box 209 Cedar Bluff, VA 24609.

Ms. Dean is survived by several cousins, many friends, former students and co-workers.

Graveside services for Ms. Mary Sue Dean were conducted at 2:00 P.M. Thursday, August 13, 2026, at the Grandview Memory Gardens Cemetery Mausoleum at Bluefield, VA with Pastor Annette Warren officiating. Those who attended the graveside service met at the cemetery mausoleum at 2:00 P.M. Thursday.

Online condolences may be sent to the family by going to www.SingletonFuneralService.com

Singleton Funeral Service in Cedar Bluff, VA is serving the Mary Sue Dean Family.



William “Bill” Ronald Cook

WILLIAM “BILL” RONALD COOK: Born March 17, 1939 in Grundy, VA, Bill passed away on August 10, 2026 at his current home of two years in Jefferson, GA. After graduating from East Tennessee State, Bill taught music and was the band director at Grundy High School for several years. He then pursued and was successful in pharmaceutical sales and cancer research studies before retiring in South Carolina. He was a talented and accomplished pianist and there was always a grand piano in his home. Another passion was living near the ocean and enjoying the water's beauty and peacefulness, as well as sailing, boating, and fishing.

Bill's lineage of “Cook” and “Ratliff” heritage is one that goes back many generations in the Grundy

area. He is predeceased by: his parents, Bill & Etta [Ratliff] Cook of Grundy and later Abingdon, VA; his brothers Bob Cook of Abingdon, VA and Jim “Jimbo” Cook of Lake Lure, NC; and his wife Tessa Wadford Cook of Jefferson, GA.

Bill is survived by: his twin sons Jonathan Cook, MD of Durham, North Carolina; Joel Cook, MD of Charleston, SC; and his grandson, Angus Cook of Durham, NC; step-daughter Angie Hollingsworth of Jefferson, GA and her family; and many beloved Ratliff and Cook cousins.

Bill's arrangements are handled by Evans Funeral Home in Jefferson, GA; he will be laid to rest at Evans Memory Gardens. No formal services will be held at this time.



Grundy tables proposed extension of wall behind farmers market

By **CHAD COOPER**
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Grundy Town Council members agreed to take a closer look at a proposed extension of the newly constructed wall behind the Grundy Farmers Market before deciding whether to move forward with the project.

Town Manager Dennis Ramey presented the proposal during the council's Aug. 11 meeting. The wall is located behind the farmers market at the mouth of Hoot Owl in Grundy.

Ramey said the town previously extended the lower section of the wall when money remained available from the original project. The town is now considering adding approximately 50 feet to the wall and constructing another column at its end.

The proposed addition would extend toward a road that runs down an incline behind the nearby building. Ramey said Terra Tech Engineering Firm estimated that the work would cost approximately \$10,000.

According to Ramey, the extension would help enclose and protect more of the area while still leaving an opening between the end of the wall and the nearby building. That opening would provide an outlet for water and preserve access to the area.

Ramey said money remaining in a recreation fund or from previous grant funding may be available to complete the project.

Council member Rebecca Elkins, who owns the building beside the farmers market, expressed concern about how the additional wall could affect the direction floodwater travels through the area.

Ramey said he did not believe the extension would direct water toward Elkins' building. He said water would likely follow the nearby ramp and travel through the opening between the wall and building. He also noted that the wall could help prevent trees, brush and other debris from washing against the building during a flood.

However, officials acknowledged that floodwater can be unpredictable and may not always follow an expected path.

Rather than make an immediate decision based only on photographs of the property, council members agreed to visit the location and examine the proposed extension in person before their next meeting. The matter was tabled until members have an opportunity to see the site and better understand the potential impact.

During the remainder of his report, Ramey briefly updated the council on other town matters. He said activity at the community center had declined from approximately 2,200 tickets sold in June to 1,800 tickets sold in July.

Pauline Sizemore Johnson

Pauline Sizemore Johnson on Monday, August 10, 2026, age 91, of Wolford, Virginia, took her heavenly journey, passing peacefully at her home, with her loving daughter, Lynn and grand-bully dog, Bubbles at her side.

Pauline was born on June 13, 1935, in Buchanan County, Wolford, Virginia. She was the daughter of the late Amos Sizemore and Lillie Compton Sizemore.

Pauline married the late Jack Johnson and together they had three daughters, Diana, Lynn, and Sandy. Later she retired from the Grundy Hospital and spent the remainder of her life enjoying her home and family.

Along with her parents and husband, she was preceded in death by her brothers, James, John, Michael, and J.C. Sizemore, and sisters, Marie Endicott and Beatrice Ward.

Those left to continue her legacy and kind heart are her daughter, Jackie Lynn Johnson of Wolford,

Virginia, who devoted many years as her caretaker and gave mom her absolute best of everything, pouring her heart into loving and caring for her every day. Also surviving are daughters, Diana (Steve) Kern, and Sandy (Gary) Coeburn; granddaughters, Stephanie Kern and Jody Randolph (Brad), two great-grandsons, Maddox and Braxton Randolph; sisters, June Wiley and Peggy Lamb; and her special girl, Myra Looney. She is also survived by several nieces and nephews.

The family would like to thank all her caregivers, Legacy Hospice, and her special nurse, Becky Casey.

Mom is now walking the streets of gold with her heavenly Father and her special bulldog, Bono.

A celebration of life will be held at a later date.

The Virginia Funeral Home of Grundy, Virginia, is honored to serve the family of Pauline Sizemore Johnson.



Grundy Police respond to 211 calls during July

By **CHAD COOPER**
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The Grundy Police Department responded to 211 calls for service during July, Police Chief Seth McGlothlin told the Grundy Town Council during its Aug. 11 meeting at the Town Offices.

The department's officers handled a range of calls during the month, including 35 incidents and investigations. Officers made 12 criminal arrests and conducted 69 traffic stops.

Police issued 37 uniform summonses or citations and served 16 criminal papers. Of the department's total calls for service, 39 were outside the town limits.

No reportable motor vehicle accidents were recorded during July, according to the department's monthly report. Officers also did not serve any civil

papers during the month.

McGlothlin also updated council members on several upcoming training opportunities that will help officers continue building their skills and serving the community.

McGlothlin and Accreditation Manager Dusty Childress are scheduled to attend training on Virginia's Community Policing Act on Aug. 18 at Wytheville Community College. The two will return to the college Aug. 19 for incident-based reporting training.

Sgt. Chapman is scheduled to attend Speed Measurement Instructor School from Aug. 24-27 at the police academy.

Officer Deel will attend Crisis Intervention Team training from Aug. 31 through Sept. 4 at the academy. The training helps law enforcement officers respond safely and effectively when they encounter people experiencing mental health or behavioral crises.



LOOKING BACK

From our files

By **CHAD COOPER**
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55 YEARS AGO

AUGUST 19, 1971

Harold R. Boyd of Whitewood, a 35-year-old insurance agent and Buchanan County's Republican Chairman, and Douglas Hess, a 33-year-old Certified Public Accountant of Tazewell, were nominated as the GOP candidates for the two seats in the Virginia House of Delegates from the Third Legislative District, representing the counties of Buchanan, Tazewell and Russell.

Earl E. Dellinger, a Grundy auto dealer, has announced himself as a Democratic candidate for the House of Delegates from the three-county district comprising Buchanan, Tazewell and Russell counties.

45 YEARS AGO

AUGUST 20, 1981

Grundy Junior High Cheerleaders received an improvement ribbon during the final day of competition at Pikeville College Cheerleading Camp that was held August 2-7 on the college campus. The Grundy Junior High School Cheerleading squad consisted of Terrena Dotson, Mindy Carter, Kaye Rife, Greta Mullins, Traci Hall, Sarah Mullins and Sara Rash.

David A. Hoagland, Pastor of Vansant Baptist Church, Vansant, received the Doctor of Divinity Degree from Covington Theological Seminary, Fort Oglethorpe, Ga., at the annual commencement. Dr. Hoagland is married to the former Mildred L. Thompson, and they have two children, Scott and Jessica.

35 YEARS AGO

AUGUST 22, 1991

Two county students have received scholarships, and another recently graduated from Virginia Intermont College in Bristol. Tina Lynn Prater of Hurley recently received an Achievement Scholarship from VI. Prater is also the recipient of an Academic Excellence Scholarship and has been named to the college's dean's list. Rebecca McClellan of Grundy has been awarded a Presidential Scholarship. The scholarship provides McClellan with a full tuition award.

The Alpha Xi chapter of the Delta Kappa Gamma Society International remembered its beloved sister, Maudie Ward, with a stately transition ceremony at the Buchanan County Funeral Home on July 30. President Mary Salyer presided at the service, honoring her very special friend and teaching associate who taught first grade at Whitewood for 30 years.

Linda Justus, band director at Hurley High, sang a praise hymn at the opening of the service. Janice Farmer sang The Lord's Prayer, and Shelby McClanahan sang Amazing Grace.

25 YEARS AGO

AUGUST 23, 2001

Irena Childress, a junior at Grundy High School, has been named to Who's Who Among American High School Students for the second consecutive year. She has also been selected as a member of the National Honor Roll. Her biography will appear in each of the national publications. She is the daughter of Warren and Diane Childress of Vansant.

Luke Owens has been number one before. -- A three-time state champion wrestler in high school. -- The 1997 Junior National freestyle wrestling champion. -- A first-team all-state football star.

But never has the former Grundy wrestling and football standout sounded more excited than when he reached number one on the depth chart at the left guard position for the 9th-ranked college football team in the country.

After two seasons as a key backup in the offensive line and a special teams player at Virginia Tech, Owens is expected to open the season at left guard when the Hokies open the season at home on September 1 against Connecticut.

Grundy Volunteer Fire Department marks 79 years of service



An early photograph of the Grundy Volunteer Fire Department station shows two fire trucks extending from the building's bays. The department was established in 1947 (photo courtesy of GVFD).

By **CHAD COOPER**
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For nearly eight decades, generations of Grundy Volunteer Fire Department members have answered the call when their neighbors needed them most.

Last Wednesday, Aug. 12, marked the department's 79th anniversary, celebrating a history built by volunteers who have given their time and placed their safety at risk

to protect the Town of Grundy and communities throughout Buchanan County.

GVFD Capt. Corey Viers said the anniversary provides an opportunity to honor that history while also looking toward the department's future.

"Reaching 79 years as a fire department is something that deserves to be recognized, but I think what matters most is what we're doing to make sure this department is still here and serving this commu-

nity years from now," Viers said.

The department's long history has been shaped by men and women willing to leave their homes and families at a moment's notice to respond to fires, vehicle crashes and other emergencies.

"Grundy Fire Department has a long history of volunteers who have sacrificed their time, their families' time, and often their own safety to protect the Town of Grundy and Buchanan County," Viers said. "We have a responsibility to honor that history, but we have to continue moving forward."

Training has become a major part of that effort. Viers said 21 of the department's 22 members have earned at least Firefighter I certification, with another member working toward completing the certification. The department also has 11 instructors among its ranks.

"That's something I'm extremely proud of because it shows we're not just putting people in trucks, we're investing in making sure they're properly trained and prepared to do the job," Viers said.

Viers said ensuring the department remains prepared to serve future generations will require more than finding people willing to respond when an alarm sounds.

"If Grundy Fire is going to be here serving this community another 79 years from now, it will take more than just having people willing to answer the alarm," he said. "It takes training, accountability, transparency, and a commitment to continually



A photograph taken this year recreates the early image from the same angle, showing two modern fire engines extending from the station's bays as the department celebrates 79 years of service (photo courtesy of GVFD).

SEE **FIRE DEPARTMENT** | 6A

GOOD OL DAYS



Virginia Mountaineer

HORSESHOE pitching champion Bill Langford throws a ringer during Family Fun Day activities Saturday, August 15, 1981, at Oakwood, sponsored by the Buchanan Dickenson Shrine Club. Langford was the winner in both the singles and doubles events, walking away with \$325 in prize money. Archery contests, pony rides and other events were held during the day.

Congressman Griffith: Organ Scandal

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

To continue momentum on this front, I reintroduced the bill in the 119th Congress with Senator Rand Paul. But



WEEKLY REPORT
FROM THE CAPITOL

the Trump Administration is actively responding to my concerns.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Rocklick News

By DEBBIE FOSTER

Hello Readers,

Ray and I were still awake at 5:00 Sunday morning, so we didn't make it to church. I watched Brother Rodney bring the message: God is everywhere at all times. He read 1 Kings 8:27, Isaiah 66:1, Ezekiel 37:27, John 1:1,14, Psalm 110:1, Psalm 139:8, Matthew 22:41-46, John 10:30, John 6:46, John 14:6-9, John 16:7, Romans 8:14, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20. He had a great message.

We had a couple of friends come by after church to visit us. It was so good to have company. Ray and I have run out of things to talk about with each other.

We got up late Monday morning, and I fixed breakfast. Our electricity went out about 1:45 and came back on about 4:00. My AEP update said the estimate was 7:00, and I learned several things today. Ray's on oxygen to live; a lot of people are. When the power goes off, his oxygen concentrator goes off. I got a portable tank and switched it out. That tank is only half full, but that gives me enough time to get a full one and get it ready. When the power came back on, he had one full bottle left.

When the power goes off, our Internet goes down. I get outage reports from AEP, but I can't see them because I have no Internet. I can't Google their outage number because I have no Internet. They quit printing phone books; we don't need them anymore. Look up the outage number and have it ready beforehand.

Cell phones can't be used when the power is out and Wi-Fi is down. We still have a landline push-button phone from the Sheriff's office days, but I don't have the outage number to report anything.

Thank God the power came back on when it did. I've already written down the outage number, and I'm going to order extra smaller oxygen bottles to have on hand in the house.

A ramp from the garage to the house is a priority now. I have large oxygen bottles in the garage we use for traveling, but they weigh about 50 pounds, and I can't lift/carry them up and down steps into the house. The Farmers Almanac has predicted lots of snow, so I've got to get ready and prepared.

I got up early Tuesday and went to the hospital for my yearly mammogram. I'm praying everything is good.

Prayers and condolences for the family and friends of Gary Ratliff. He passed away today after battling sickness for a long time. Pray for his wife, Linda, and family.

Prayers and condolences also for the family and friends of Tony Charles. We go way back to the old United Coal Company days when Ray worked with his mother.

We got up ridiculously early Wednesday morning to make a quick trip (3-hour drive) to our cabin so an insurance inspector could take a 10-minute tour of the inside. It was a very long day.

The mobile food truck, Feeding Southwest Virginia, an equal opportunity provider, was at the Council Park today. They served 152 households.

Feeding my Sheep held their food giveaway Friday morning (handicap only; must have a handicap placard or tag). Their giveaway hours have changed for Friday only. The new Friday hours are 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.. Saturday giveaway times are the same. They served 383



households over the 2 days.

Reminder: the mobile food truck, Feeding Southwest Virginia, an equal opportunity provider, will be at the Grundy Community Center on Wednesday, August 26. The truck arrives about 9:00 a.m., and the giveaway starts about 10:00 a.m.. This is a drive-through event; stay in your car, and we will come to you.

My prayer list is long: Shannon and Christine (needs urgent prayers), Sarah, Shawne, Brad, Joann, Michelle, Linda, Alvin, Mac, Gary, Jerry and Vicky, Betty and Arlene, Leroy, Linda and James, Craig, Scott, Martha, Teresa, Jacob, Shawn, my uncle Tommy, Charles, Eugene, Melinda, Stanley and Crystal, Steve, Scotty, Brother Kenny (back surgery), Jon, Freddie and Sheila, Darrell and Vicki, Trish, Hudson, Amber, Dennis (urgent prayers needed) and Kathy, Courtland, Amy, Anthony, Henry, Jerry, Pastor Gene and Joyce Miller, Lilly, Clarence and Reba, Matt, Jerry and Lona, Brenda, Justin, Glenda, Shirley, JJ, Mike, Jack, Pastor Ronnie and Alma Sliger, Timmy, Riley, Darrell, Maryann, Brian, Miss Gertrude (keep praying for answers for this sweet lady), Patty, Bill, Charles and Von, Ann, Jack and Annette, Debbie (brain tumor), Curtis, Susie, Carol (needs urgent prayers), Ronnie and Carol, Mike, Thelma, Kim, Judy, Malva, Linda, Randy, Tyler, Miss Jean, Jerry, D.C., June, Rachel, Jason, Lonie, Dean, Ralph, Ashleigh, Brenda, Barbara, Chris and family, Lillian, Geraldine, Colin, Snoda, Judy, Mike and Dee, Bryan and Tina PPTA, Pam, Phillip, Peggy and Family, Renee, Melissa, Charlie, Linda, Gordon, Miss Irene, Elmo, Teresa, Chris, Anthony, Miss Pauline (needs prayer), Margie, Melinda, Archie and Cathy, Martha, Colton, Ira, Jennifer, Daniel, Tracy, Anderson, Nicole, Dave, Hope, Liz, Barbara, Danny, Brenda, Nancy, Joe and Sherry, Gail, Bobby, Christie, Kenny, Baby Weston (encouraging updates, keep praying), Baby Leon, Sandy, Buck and Harriet, Tommy (motorcycle accident), 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

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

John 14:6 KJV

Until next week...

Don't worry about tomorrow; Jesus is already there.



Do You Still Hear
The Trumpets?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Maybe doing the same old thing all the time is what has become boring to you? We are creatures of habit and often we do the same things the same way forever. Maybe learning a new game or activity might be stimulating?

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

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

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OPINIONS

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THE WATCHMAN: Don't Be Overwhelmed

The days of darkness are upon us. Don't be overcome by the darkness; instead, overcome it by walking in the light. The Bible tells us in 1 John 1:5-7 that God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all. Verse 6 says that if we say we have fellowship with him but walk in darkness, we lie and do not know the truth. Verse 7 says that if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his son, cleanses us from all sin.

The darkness will only intensify. As I write this article, I am thinking about five years ago, when I was in Bristol Regional Hospital, dying of COVID-19. This week marks my fifth anniversary of my experience with death and my healing from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Each day I live, I thank Him for healing me and letting me come back to preach a little longer, write an article, deliver another load of backpacks to the kids at school, help my granddaughters, or play with my great-granddaughter. God has really been good to me.

About six weeks ago, I gave my testimony at Joel and Tina Horn Church, The Anchor Souls Harbor, about my experience of seeing heaven. There was a preacher there, Jeremy Mikes, who lives in Abingdon, Virginia, who told the audience that my doctor, when I had COVID, lived just a few houses down from him and told him and his wife that I should not be alive today.

But God. The day they released me from the hospital, my doctor told me, "You are our greatest success story for the last two weeks."

One of the things the Lord Jesus Christ showed me was the darkness already covering the earth, with only a little light left. At that point, I asked and prayed that he would let me come back, preach a little longer and help my family, and Jesus granted my request.

You may ask what that means. I will tell you if you will listen.

The Bible tells us in Isaiah 60:2, "For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth and gross darkness the people." But the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.

Just a few verses back, Isaiah 59:19 says, "So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west." We live in the western hemisphere of the earth, and it goes on to say, "and his glory from the rising of the sun." Where does the sun rise? In the East. Who lives in the East? Israel.

Then look at what the word of God says. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the spirit of the Lord shall lift a standard against him. Psalm 68:1 says, "Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered, let them also that hate him flee before him."

For the past few years, Islam has been chanting death to America and death to Israel. I believe they mean what they say. When they chanted from the river to the sea on Oct. 7, 2023, they were trying to do what they had been saying for years: death to America, death to Israel.

So the enemy came in like a flood, but the Lord also raised a standard from the east, and the forces of the west stepped up. On Feb. 28, 2026, the United States and Israel launched Operation Epic Fury against Iran, the enemy who wanted to destroy them both.

Was this the hand of the Lord against our enemy? I think so.

Let's look at Psalm 32:6-7. Verse 6 says, "For this shall every one that is Godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found, surely in the floods of greater waters they shall not come nigh unto thee." Verse 7 says, "Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance."

Yet it's going to get darker. 2 Timothy 3:1 says, "This also in the last days, perilous times shall come." That means dangerous times. Verse 13 says, "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." Verse 5 says, "Having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof; from such turn away."

God is looking for those who will trust him. Job 13:15 says, "Though ye slay me, yet will I trust him."

We must keep our eyes on Jesus. There is so much happening right now; it's easy to take our eyes off the Lord. Hebrews 12:2 tells us to "look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith."

2 Chronicles 20:9-12 from Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir. Jehoshaphat said in verse 13, "For we have no might against this great company that cometh against us, neither know we what to do. But our eyes are upon thee."

Because of this, God said in verse 17, "Ye shall not need to fight in this battle; set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord with you; fear not, nor be dismayed."

The problems we continue to face in this world are changing dramatically and will get worse before Jesus comes back, but remember his words in Hebrews 13:5: "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

If you are a child of God, you are never alone. We have no need to be overwhelmed. We overcome darkness by walking in the light of God's word and being filled with His Spirit.

Psalm 119:105 says, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path." Psalm 119:135 says, "Make thy face to shine upon thy servant." Isaiah 60:1 says, "Arise and shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."

We are warring against insanity. Let's fight the good fight of faith and lay hold on eternal life.

Revelation 12:11: "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto death."

Romans 8:31: "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

I will close with these words in Psalm 27:1: "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?"

Keep your eyes on Jesus.
Stay Tuned, The Watchman

Savvy Senior: A Caregiver's Guide to Medicare

Dear Savvy Senior,

I'm taking care of my elderly father who recently had a stroke and have a lot of questions about how Medicare works and what it covers. He's enrolled in original Medicare. Can you help me?

--Caregiving Connie

Dear Connie,

Taking care of a parent after a stroke is hard enough without having to figure out Medicare too. The good news is that understanding the program can make life a lot easier. Knowing what's covered – and what isn't – can help you plan ahead, avoid costly surprises and make sure your father gets the care he needs. Here's a practical guide to get you started.

Medicare basics

One of the best places to start is the official "Medicare & You" handbook. It explains benefits and services in plain language. Medicare mails an updated copy every fall, but you can also view it online at [medicare.gov/medicare-and-you](https://www.medicare.gov/medicare-and-you).

For questions, call Medicare at 800-633-4227 to speak with a representative. They can clarify coverage for doctor visits, hospital stays, home health care, and more.

Your state's State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) is another great resource. SHIP counselors provide free, one-on-one counseling to help you understand your coverage, identify cost-saving programs, and answer questions about Medicare. Find a counselor near you at [shiphelp.org](https://www.shiphelp.org) or 877-839-2675.

Caregivers should also create a secure Medicare account at [medicare.gov/account/login](https://www.medicare.gov/account/login). Once your father's account is set up, you can review his coverage, track claims, check the status of medical services and prescriptions, and see which preventive benefits he's eligible for. It's an easy way to stay organized and keep all of your father's Medicare information in one place.

Choosing providers

Medicare also lets you compare providers online at [medicare.gov/care-compare](https://www.medicare.gov/care-compare). You can search for doctors, hospitals, rehab centers, nursing homes, hospice providers, and medical equipment suppliers in your area. This is especially useful after a stroke, when your father may need rehabilitation or specialized care at home.

Covered services

Original Medicare covers many services your father may need, including hospital care, doctor visits, lab tests, and outpatient treatments.

It also covers home health care if your father is homebound, under a doctor's care, and needs part-time skilled nursing or rehabilitation therapy, such as



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MILLER

physical, occupational or speech therapy.

Medicare also covers medically necessary durable medical equipment and supplies prescribed by a doctor, including oxygen, wheelchairs, walkers and catheters. Short-term skilled nursing care in a facility may also be covered for up to 100 days after a qualifying hospital stay.

Prescription medications are generally covered through a separate Medicare Part D plan, which helps pay for many outpatient drugs your father may need.

Hospice care is covered for patients with a terminal illness and a life expectancy of six months or less, as certified by a doctor. It includes nursing care, medications for comfort and short-term respite care to give caregivers a break.

However, Medicare generally doesn't pay for long-term custodial care at home, in an assisted living facility or in a nursing home. That means it generally won't cover ongoing help with daily activities like bathing, dressing, eating, using the bathroom or supervision for someone with dementia. Routine dental care, dentures, eye exams for glasses and hearing aids are also not covered.

Cost help

If your father has limited income and resources, check programs that help reduce Medicare costs. Extra Help assists with prescription drug expenses, and Medicare Savings Programs can help pay premiums, deductibles, and coinsurance.

Visit [medicare.gov/basics/costs/help](https://www.medicare.gov/basics/costs/help) or call 800-633-4227 to learn more or check eligibility.

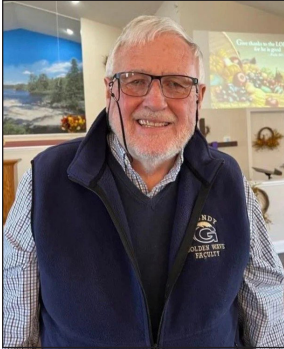
Taking time to understand Medicare can make caregiving a little less stressful. It helps you stay on top of appointments, treatments and equipment needs, while giving you greater confidence that your father is receiving the care and benefits he's entitled to.

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

Shuckin' Corn: The Big Yellow Bus

By LARRY
FRANK FIELDS

"Time for the bus - you're going to be late - and you know that driver ain't gonna wait. Pop-Tarts in the toaster, so make your bed - Come on now! Hurry! Hurry! Hurry!" Momma said. I get a move on without a big fuss Cause I really like riding' the big yellow bus. So, I fluff up my pillow and throw on my clothes, Wolf down a Pop-Tart... and get milk up my nose. Running out the door I trip on my dog, And then the bus is coming'... through the fog. Its lights flashing yellow ... and now they are red; The bus screeches to a stop ... and I run ahead. Boardin' the bus, I speak to the driver. "How's it going?" he says, with a big high-five.



The driver is jolly with all of us -
And I sure like riding' the big yellow bus!
School is cool - my friends are neat;
And I've got some teachers that can't be beat -
But there's one thing even better than play ...
Ridin' the big yellow bus down the state highway.

Adult education connection

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

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

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

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

Managing stress is another important part of successful learning. Adults may feel overwhelmed by school, work, and family responsibilities. Practicing relaxation techniques, taking short breaks, organizing



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tasks, and setting realistic goals can help reduce stress and make learning more manageable.

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

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

YOUR HOMETOWN NEWS IS JUST A CLICK AWAY



LOCAL NEWS



SPORTS



OBITUARIES



COMMUNITY EVENTS

www.VirginiaMountaineer.com

Spotlight on the CAM

By JODI REYNOLDS
Theatre Guild of Buchanan County

If you’ve ever wondered what happens at The CAM when there isn’t an audience in the seats, the answer is simple - a little bit of everything.

A typical week at The CAM is a mixture of rehearsals, meetings, maintenance, planning, problem-solving and, occasionally, ceiling tiles unexpectedly landing on the floor. This past week managed to include all of the above.

Monday began with Property Manager Wade Vance preparing the building for that evening’s Board of Directors meeting while tackling regular maintenance and continuing the ongoing organization of the dressing rooms and prop room. Outside, there was mowing and weed-eating to be done, too. That evening, the Board gathered at The CAM to begin the exciting work of shaping our 2027 season, reviewing show possibilities and working toward a schedule for another full year of community theatre.

Then came Tuesday.

Wade arrived to discover several ceiling tiles on the floor, the result of an apparent leak from upstairs. After cleaning up the mess, he contacted our HVAC contractors to track down the problem. Then it was back to work organizing the dressing and prop rooms in preparation for our upcoming production of The Beverly Hillbillies.

Tuesday also brought progress on another improvement to our stage. Wade prepped the existing front and ordered design materials for a brand-new stage front that will include built-in lighting and electrical outlets. It’s one of those improvements audiences may not immediately recognize, but one that will give us more flexibility and possibilities for productions and performances for years to come.

That evening, the cast of The Beverly Hillbillies arrived for rehearsal, filling the building with an entirely different kind of activity.

By Wednesday, our friends at Appalachian Air had come to the rescue. The culprit behind Tuesday’s ceiling-tile surprise was a clogged drain line. They quickly took care of the problem; Wade replaced the damaged ceiling tiles, and just like that, the latest CAM adventure was over. Easy peasy.

Thursday brought another Beverly Hillbillies rehearsal while, behind the scenes, members of the Executive



The CAM’s newly erected sign holder is now in place and showing off its latest signs, which were hung Friday, Aug. 14. The new display provides a fresh way to showcase information and happenings at the CAM (photo submitted by the CAM).

utive Committee were busy preparing for an exciting new chapter at The CAM. Paperwork, office preparations and logistics are underway as we get ready to welcome our new Executive Director.

And on Friday, something new appeared outside. Fresh signage was installed near the road by our bridge, creating another way for us to let the community know what’s happening at The CAM. Keep an eye on those signs because the messages will change as new productions, concerts, classes and special events hit the calendar.

That was one week. No opening night. No packed house. No curtain call. But it is these typical weeks that make all of those things possible.

The CAM is a stage, but it is also a building that needs constant care, a nonprofit that requires planning, a gathering place that is always evolving and a home for the arts that rarely sits still.

Behind every production and event are countless hours spent mowing grass, fixing leaks, organizing props, improving the facility, attending meetings, completing paperwork and rehearsing for the next show. Behind every production and event are countless hours spent mowing grass, fixing leaks, organizing props, improving the facility, attending meetings, completing paperwork and rehearsing for the next show.

Sometimes the best way to understand The CAM is to simply spend a week inside its walls. There’s always something happening, even when the curtain is closed.

Our next event is our fourth Third Thursday in our 2026 Summer Concert Series featuring Thomas Taylor on Thursday, August 20. Dave’s Dawgs food trailer will be on-site serving up All-American favorites. See you at The CAM.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

FROM PAGE 3A

improving how we serve our community.”

That commitment also means protecting the confidence residents have placed in the department, Viers said.

“We have to be good stewards of the trust this community has placed in us and hold ourselves to a high standard both on the fireground and within the department,” he said.

The department continues to follow the same mission that has guided its service: “Grundy Fire Department is dedicated to offering the highest level of fire protection to the Town of Grundy and Buchanan County, ensuring a safe and secure environment for our residents and businesses.”

As GVFD celebrates 79 years, Viers said the anniversary is both a milestone and a reminder that the department’s work continues.

“I’m proud of where Grundy Fire Department is today, but I’m even more excited about where we’re headed,” Viers said. “Seventy-nine years is a tremendous accomplishment, but it’s not the finish line.”

He credited the department’s members for continuing to train, prepare and serve whenever the community calls.

“I’m proud to be part of a department that continues to answer the call, and I’m proud of the men and women who are willing to put in the work to make sure we’re ready when our community needs us,” Viers said.

The current Grundy Volunteer Fire Department roster includes:

Bob Anderson, chief; Randy Surber, deputy chief; Albert Childress, assistant chief; Corey Viers, captain; Billy Yates, lieutenant; Mike Hatfield, sergeant; Anthony Scott, sergeant; Shane Anderson, sergeant; Ryan Lark, chaplain/firefighter; Phil Vandyke, master firefighter; Danny Hawks, master firefighter; Johnny Sexton, master firefighter; Rusty Lark, master firefighter; Michael Rowlett, master firefighter; Wyatt Surber, Firefighter II; Glenn StClair, Firefighter II; Angel StClair, Firefighter II; Austin Mullins, Firefighter II; John Lark, Firefighter I; Tyler Yates, Firefighter I; Blake Childress, Firefighter I; and Logan Mullins, firefighter/IT.

Buchanan County approves LDSS bonuses, changes mineral tax return requirements

By CHAD COOPER
coopkam@gmail.com

The Buchanan County Board of Supervisors approved one-time bonuses for employees of the Buchanan County Department of Social Services during its Aug. 3 meeting at the Buchanan County Government Center on Slate Creek.

Board Chairman Tim Hess, who represents the Hurricane District, opened a public hearing on an ordinance authorizing a one-time bonus equal to 2% of each eligible employee’s base salary.

No members of the public spoke during the hearing. North Grundy District Supervisor Lee Dotson made the motion to approve the bonus ordinance, and Knox District Supervisor Trey Adkins seconded it. It was unanimously approved by the board.

The bonuses are supported primarily through state funding designated for local Department of Social Services personnel and fringe-benefit costs.

The Commonwealth of Virginia is providing \$68,229.65 toward the bonuses, while Buchanan County will contribute \$4,295. The combined funding totals \$72,524.65.

The board initially adopted the ordinance on an emergency basis June 8. The Aug. 3 public hearing was required before the ordinance could be adopted permanently. Although the ordinance is permanent, it authorizes only a one-time bonus and does not create a recurring salary increase.

Under Section 15.2-1508 of the Code of Virginia, a locality must have an ordinance in place before its governing body can provide bonus payments to local employees.

The bonuses must be paid and reimbursed as part of the 2025-26 fiscal year.

In other business, the board held a public hearing on a proposed amendment to Chapter 88, Taxation, of the Buchanan County Code. The change amends Section 88-32, which governs tax returns filed by coal producers and businesses that extract oil or natural gas in the county.

No one spoke during that public hearing. After the hearing was closed, Rocklick District Supervisor Craig Stiltner made the motion to adopt the amendment. Following a second, the board approved the change unanimously.

Coal, oil and natural gas producers are required to file a return with the Buchanan County Commissioner of the Revenue by the 20th day of each month. The return must report information from the preceding month, including the amount of coal, oil or gas produced, gross receipts and any deductions used to calculate those receipts.

The amendment addresses situations in which a taxpayer, despite making a reasonable effort, cannot obtain accurate production, sales or tax figures before the filing deadline.

In those cases, the taxpayer must still file a return by the deadline using estimated figures. A business may report zero production, zero gross receipts or no tax liability solely to comply with the filing requirement.

The taxpayer must then amend the return with accurate information as soon as reasonably possible. The amended return must be filed no later than 90 days after the original deadline or within 10 days after the taxpayer receives the information needed to complete it accurately, whichever comes first.

A return based on estimates or zero figures will be considered incomplete until it is properly amended. Failure to submit the amended return on time may result in penalties, interest or other enforcement measures.

The change does not extend the deadline for paying taxes. Any additional tax found to be owed after a return is amended may still be subject to applicable interest and penalties.

If the regular filing deadline falls on a Saturday, Sunday, legal holiday or another day when the county courthouse is closed, the deadline will move to the next day the Commissioner of the Revenue’s Office is open.

When Life Gives You Tomatoes... Make Pie!



Tomato Pie

Yield: 1 (9-inch) pie

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

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

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

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

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

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



Eagles bring experience, high expectations into first golf season

By CHAD COOPER
coopkam@gmail.com

Southern Gap High School's golf program is new, but the Eagles are not starting from scratch. Head coach Preston Hibbitts, who served as Grundy High School's head golf coach for many seasons, has inherited an experienced roster of golfers from now defunct Council, Grundy, Hurley, and

Twin Valley High Schools. Many competed against one another in the Black Diamond District, and several have advanced to regional tournaments with their former schools. "I feel honored by being the first golf coach for SGHS," Hibbitts said. "I hope the program will be a good tradition of quality golf."

SEE **EAGLES BRING** | 2B



The first Southern Gap High School golf team gathers for a photo during the school's first fall sports media day on Aug. 6, 2026, at Southern Gap High School. Kneeling, from left, are Ben Mayhew, Braden Hopkins, Jackson Deel, Mason Boyd and Ayden Whited. Standing, from left, are Parker Hughes, Jaxon Hardin, Ethan Deel, Levi Tackett, Jansen Davis, Gavin Hartford, Carter Deel and Wyatt Street. Not pictured is Jase Hurley.



Southern Gap freshman Carson Blankenship takes the handoff before finding the end zone during Saturday's preseason scrimmage against Patrick Henry (Photo by Chad Cooper).

One county, one team, Eagles soar in historic debut

By CHAD COOPER
coopkam@gmail.com

For the first time in Buchanan County sports history, fans from Council, Grundy, Hurley and Twin Valley filled the same stands and cheered for the same team. The result was a night that felt much bigger than a preseason football scrimmage. A large crowd gathered last Saturday evening for the first athletic event held on the campus of Southern Gap High School, watching the inaugural Eagles football team turn in an impressive performance against Patrick Henry at the new Red Robertson Athletic Complex.

After Patrick Henry challenged Southern

Gap during the opening series, the Eagles settled in, made adjustments and eventually took control behind a physical defense and a deep rushing attack. During two quarters of live action, Southern Gap outscored the Rebels 24-0. "We had an awesome turnout, man. I couldn't be prouder of the turnout," Southern Gap head coach Greg Tester said. "And, you know, like I said, it's just a good feeling of togetherness right now with all these schools combining, man." That feeling of togetherness could be seen throughout the stadium. The new facility, surrounded by the mountains of Buchanan County, was filled with fans who had spent

SEE **ONE TEAM** | 3B



Southern Gap's Ayden Whited follows his blockers for a big gain during the Eagles' preseason scrimmage against Patrick Henry at the Red Robinson Athletic Complex (Photo by Chad Cooper).

In the Locker Room

Remembering the biggest sports story of 2025
By CHAD COOPER | coopkam@gmail.com
As the lights come back on across Southwest Virginia and we turn our attention to another high school football season, it's worth remembering the story that dominated the end of the 2025 season.

And it had very little to do with what happened between the sidelines. The biggest sports story in Southwest Virginia last fall wasn't a championship, an upset or a record-breaking performance.



CHAD COOPER
IN THE LOCKER ROOM

It was the disappearance of Union head football coach Travis Turner. Nearly nine months later, Turner is still missing. It's hard to believe it has been that long. Turner disappeared Nov. 20, 2025, as Union was in the middle of a postseason run. What happened that day would soon become one of the most unusual stories Southwest Virginia high school sports has ever seen.

Virginia State Police special agents were traveling to Turner's home in Appalachia as part of the early stages of a criminal investigation. State police have emphasized that investigators were going there to question Turner, not arrest him.

But before police arrived, Turner grabbed a firearm, left his home and disappeared into the mountains of Wise County. He hasn't been seen since.

Think about that. One day, Turner was the head coach of one of Southwest Virginia's most recognizable football programs. Then, with police on their way to his home, he disappeared into the mountains. Days became weeks. Weeks became months. Now another football season has arrived, and Turner still hasn't been found.

Virginia State Police say Turner, 46, of Appalachia, is wanted on five counts of possession of child pornography and five counts of using a computer to solicit a minor. Police say additional charges are pending and Turner is considered a fugitive.

Those allegations are serious, and Turner has not been located to answer them. But to understand why his disappearance became such a massive sports story, you have to understand who Travis Turner was in Southwest Virginia football. Turner wasn't simply Union's head coach. He grew up in the game.

Before Union High School existed, Turner was one of the stars of the powerhouse Appalachia Bulldogs, playing for his father, legendary head coach Tom Turner.

Appalachia is gone now, one of the many former Southwest Virginia high schools lost to consolidation, but anyone who followed football during those years remembers what that name meant on Friday nights.

The Bulldogs were a powerhouse, and Turner helped lead Appalachia to multiple state championships during his playing days. Later, Appalachia and Powell Valley consolidated to create Union, combining two of the richest football traditions in this part of Virginia. Turner eventually took over the Bears and built his

SEE **IN THE LOCKER ROOM** | 2B

Southern Gap Dirt Drags set for three days of action

By CHAD COOPER
coopkam@gmail.com

Engines will roar, mud will fly and competitors will put their off-road skills to the test when the Southern Gap Dirt Drags return for three days of action this week. The competition will be held Thursday, Aug. 20, through Saturday, Aug. 22, as part of the Southern Gap Trails & Tunes Festival. The schedule includes drag racing, a mud bog, hill climbing and several light-hearted competitions designed to entertain racers and spectators alike. The action will begin Thursday when the gates open at 5 p.m. Events will start at 7 p.m. with a wheelie competition and panty race. Friday's schedule will offer a full afternoon of competition. Gates will open at 11 a.m., with events beginning at 12:30 p.m. Friday's lineup includes a tire toss, Dizzy Daze, Blindfold Breakout, Crazy 8s barrel racing and tug of war. The mixture of speed, skill and unusual challenges will give competitors several ways to showcase

their abilities while keeping the crowd entertained. The largest slate of racing is scheduled for Saturday. Gates will open at 10 a.m., and competition will begin at 11:30 a.m. Saturday's events will include a donut competition, mud bog, hill climb and drag racing. An awards ceremony will follow the conclusion of competition. Admission wristbands are now available. A three-day wristband costs \$25 and provides admission to all scheduled events, while single-day admission is \$20. Wristbands may be purchased in advance at Extreme Motorsports or at the gate. The Southern Gap Dirt Drags have become an opportunity for off-road competitors and fans to gather for a weekend filled with friendly competition, challenging terrain and plenty of horsepower. Whether they come to compete, support a favorite driver or simply watch the mud fly, spectators will have three days of activities to enjoy during this year's Southern Gap Trails & Tunes Festival.



Two motorcycle riders race side by side during the Southern Gap Dirt Drags. (Photo by McKinzey Lester)

EAGLES BRING

FROM PAGE 1B

Instead of building a team filled with beginners, Hibbitts faced the challenge of combining four established programs into one.

“We are very lucky in this regard,” Hibbitts said. “We had good programs at every former county high school. So, we only needed to find a way to knit these kids together into one program.”

That process has been helped by the friendships the golfers formed while competing in the Black Diamond District.

“High school golf teams in the county have been close for the last few years,” Hibbitts said. “We played together in the BOD and there were a lot of great friendships built. That has carried over to SGHS. We have a great and cohesive team.”

Leading the Eagles is senior Mason Boyd, a three-time Black Diamond District Player of the Year who enters the season as one of Southwest Virginia’s most accomplished returning golfers.

Boyd has competed on the Blue Ridge Junior Golf Tour, earned numerous medalist honors and advanced to the state tournament. He made Southern Gap history in the Eagles’ first match by shooting a 38 and earning medalist honors.

“Mason is the most experienced golfer we have,” Hibbitts said. “He has played a lot of golf. He’s competed on the Blue Ridge Junior Golf Tour, he has won countless medalist honors, and has competed in the state tournament. Mason is also one of the most humble people I know and is not afraid to help his teammates. I am thankful we have such a great player and person as team leader.”

Boyd’s performance helped Southern Gap win its first match at Willowbrook Golf Course and gave the golf program the first athletic victory in school history.

“It was cool to write our names in the record books,” Hibbitts said. “For as long as SGHS exists, the golf team will always have the first win in school history. I hope it is a good omen for SGHS athletics.”

The Eagles finished that historic match with a team score of 170. Honaker placed second at 185, followed by East Ridge, Kentucky, at 201; Southern Gap’s junior varsity team at 205; and River View, West Virginia, at 223.

Southern Gap’s golfers understood that they were establishing the first marks in the school’s record book. Hibbitts even instructed his players to contact him if they recorded a birdie so the golf ball could



Southern Gap High School head golf coach Preston Hibbitts is leading the Eagles during the program’s inaugural season.

be saved for the school’s trophy case.

“We had talked about how we would be setting benchmarks before the match,” Hibbitts said. “Players had standing orders to call me if they made a birdie so we could save the ball for the trophy case. Everyone really enjoyed being part of Eagles sports history.”

The strong opening was not a one-match performance. Southern Gap followed it with an impressive showing at Holston Hills in Marion.

“The thing I’ve been most impressed with has been the level we are capable of bringing onto the course,” Hibbitts said. “In our first match our team posted the best team score of any I have ever coached. In our second tournament of the season we also posted the best score one of my teams has ever had at Holston Hills. It was also the first time [No change — inside direct quotation; confirm with reporter if needed] scoring less than 90 in the same match.”

Experience is expected to be one of Southern Gap’s biggest strengths as the Eagles enter the Southwest District.

“This team has a lot of experience,” Hibbitts said. “Several players have participated in junior tours and more than half the team has participated in regional tournaments as members of the former high schools. I think that will prove to be important as we enter the Southwest District.”

The Eagles will be challenged by a district that includes defending state champion Graham, along with Lebanon, Marion, Richlands, Tazewell and Virginia High. Hibbitts believes Southern Gap can compete for the district’s second regional qualifying position.

“The SWD is tough,” Hibbitts said. “Graham is the defending state champion and has a stacked team this season, but we believe we can compete for the 2nd qualifying spot out of the district.”

Southern Gap has already faced several district opponents during the tournament at Holston Hills. The Eagles finished well ahead of Richlands, Tazewell and Virginia High and were within striking distance of Marion on its home course.

Senior leadership will be important for the Eagles. In addition to Boyd, the roster features seniors Braden Hopkins, Ayden Whited, Jackson Deel and Ben Mayhew.

Junior Jaxon Hardin has also made an early impression.

“Jaxon Hardin has really impressed me in the first two contests,” Hibbitts said. “I had seen him play good golf for Hurley last year, but I was surprised at his level here at the beginning of the season.”

The Eagles’ younger golfers include sophomores Ethan Deel, Wyatt Street, Carter Deel and Parker Hughes; freshmen Gavin Hartford and Jansen Davis; and eighth-graders Jase Hurley and Levi Tackett.

Hibbitts pointed to Hurley and Hartford as two younger players with bright futures.

“We also have some promising younger players such as Jase Hurley and Gavin Hartford [Inside direct quotation — verify with reporter; possible missing word],” Hibbitts said. “They have a lot of potential as they progress.”

While Southern Gap has already demonstrated its ability to post competitive scores, Hibbitts said the golfers must continue working on course management and their decision-making during rounds.

“We need to work on improving our course management,” Hibbitts said. “The varsity guys know how to hit a golf ball. We need to improve decision making during the round. Golf is much more complicated than hitting a ball.”

The varsity team’s goals are to remain competitive and earn the respect of the Southwest District. Southern Gap’s junior varsity golfers will focus on gaining experience, learning the game and improving throughout the season.

Hibbitts said the players’ confidence and team spirit have been as encouraging as their scores.

“I can’t point to one specific area since it varies greatly from player to player, but I really like their spirit,” Hibbitts said. “They believe we can play with the SWD schools and make a good showing.”

Wins, individual honors and postseason appearances will help measure the Eagles’ first season, but Hibbitts believes success in high school athletics goes beyond a scorecard.

“I want my players to learn something and have fun,” Hibbitts said. “If they improve at golf, build friendships, and have a good time, I will be happy. High school sports are formative, not performative.”

As the Eagles begin establishing their own identity, Hibbitts wants Buchanan County residents to know that the players are proud to represent Southern Gap.

“I’d like the community to know that we are representing the school proudly and we would like to thank them for their support,” he said.

With an experienced roster, a three-time district player of the year leading the way and a historic victory already secured, the Eagles appear ready to establish Southern Gap as a program capable of competing for championships for years to come.

IN THE LOCKER ROOM

FROM PAGE 1B



Travis L. Turner, a former Appalachia High School football standout and longtime Union High School head football coach, remains wanted by Virginia State Police. Turner, 46, disappeared in November 2025 and is facing 10 warrants as a criminal investigation continues.

own legacy on the sideline.

That’s why the events of last November were so stunning.

A man whose life had been intertwined with Southwest Virginia football — first as a player and later as a coach — suddenly vanished in the middle of the playoffs.

And what followed was an enormous search. Virginia State Police say they have investigated more than 178 national and international leads spanning seven states. Seventeen of those tips were anonymous, and police say all of the leads investigated so far have been unfounded.

The U.S. Marshals Service, FBI and Black Diamond Search and Rescue have joined Virginia State Police. Search-and-rescue personnel, drones, K-9 teams, VSP Aviation and Special Operations teams have all been involved.

Police say 27 combined personnel are dedicated solely to the Turner case, with more than 50 additional state, local and federal personnel assisting.

Still, no credible sighting.

No confirmed location.

No Travis Turner.

“This case is worked on every day. It’s two-fold: we have the criminal investigation and the search,” Capt. J. Daniels of the VSP Bureau of Criminal Investigation’s Wytheville Field Office said. “Every single lead has been vetted and followed up on, and all have been unfounded. We need the public to continue providing information. Someone knows something that will lead to his whereabouts.”

Meanwhile, football has moved forward.

Union enters the 2026 season with Jamie Harless leading the Bears.

Harless brings 134 career victories and a strong Southwest Virginia football background to a program accustomed to winning.

He was also a four-year letterman and two-time NCAA All-American at Emory & Henry, earning first-team All-America honors in 1997. He was inducted into the Emory & Henry Sports Hall of Fame in 2009.

Harless now has the opportunity to put his own stamp on Union football.

And the players deserve that fresh start.

They have games to play, goals to chase and their own chapter of Union football history to write. The 2026 Bears shouldn’t have to carry last November’s events with them every Friday night.

But for those of us who follow high school sports across Southwest Virginia, it’s impossible to begin another football season without remembering the story that overshadowed the end of the last one.

Nearly nine months have passed since Turner walked away from his home and disappeared into the Wise County mountains.

Authorities have searched.

They’ve followed leads across state lines.

They’ve put people in the air and on the ground.

Yet, as another season kicks off, one question remains unanswered.

Where is Travis Turner?

Virginia State Police are asking anyone with information about Turner’s whereabouts to contact VSP Division 4 at 276-484-9483 or questions@vsp.virginia.gov. You can also report information to the U.S. Marshals Service at 1-877-WANTED2 (926-8332). Tips may be made anonymously.

The U.S. Marshals Service is offering a reward of up to \$5,000 for information leading to Turner’s whereabouts.

SWVA SPORTSMEN

FROM PAGE 1B

around hunting, fishing and conservation. The show included hundreds of exhibitors, seminars, demonstrations and activities, along with the annual Virginia Peninsula Sportsmen’s Association Big Game Contest.

For the Buchanan County group, however, the trip was about more than attending a show.

SWVA Sportsmen used the opportunity to represent Buchanan County and introduce visitors from other parts of Virginia to what Southwest Virginia has to offer, including the county’s elk habitat and outdoor recreation opportunities.

The group also highlighted the work of Coalfields Special Sportsmen, a part of SWVA Sportsmen that provides outdoor opportunities for individuals with disabilities and others who may face challenges that make participating in traditional outdoor activities difficult.

Among the local representatives attending the show were Ronnie Blankenship, Robert Sauer, Doug Raines, Bucky Blankenship, Brandon Boyd and Tom Hampton.

Throughout the weekend, the organizations talked with visitors about their programs while also giving away prizes and sharing information about Buchanan County.

Coalfields Special Sportsmen operates under a mission of “Enriching lives of individuals facing challenges, through outdoor experiences.”

The organization believes the outdoors should be accessible to everyone, regardless of background, experience or personal challenges. Its programs provide safe, ethical and educational hunting opportunities for individuals who might otherwise have difficulty participating because of physical, financial, social or other barriers.

Through mentors and volunteers, participants are introduced to responsible hunting practices, wildlife conservation and outdoor skills. The experiences are designed not only to teach participants about hunting,

but also to build confidence, friendships and an appreciation for wildlife and the outdoors.

Through mentors and volunteers, participants are introduced to responsible hunting practices, wildlife conservation and outdoor skills. The experiences are designed not only to teach participants about hunting, but also to build confidence, friendships and an appreciation for wildlife and the outdoors.

The program works with hunters ages six and older and partners with landowners, conservation organizations, wildlife agencies and community supporters to make its hunts possible.

The trip to Richmond gave the organization a chance to share that message with a much larger audience while also shining a spotlight on Buchanan County.

After returning home, SWVA Sportsmen reflected on the weekend and the opportunity to tell others about the work taking place in the coalfields. For the local representatives, it was a chance to show that Buchanan County’s outdoor heritage isn’t simply about hunting — it is also about using the outdoors to bring people together and create opportunities for those who may not otherwise have them.

Coalfields Special Sportsmen is already preparing for its next opportunity to do just that.

The organization’s Youth Fall Deer Hunt is scheduled for Sept. 25-27. Registration is being conducted online through its partner, Hands of a Sportsman, with a Sept. 1 registration deadline.

The upcoming hunt will continue the same mission the Buchanan County representatives carried with them to Richmond — opening the outdoors to others and creating experiences and memories that can last well beyond a weekend in the woods.



Visitors to the Virginia Outdoor Sportsman Show stop by the SWVA Sportsmen and Coalfields Special Sportsmen booth for a photo with the large elk that normally calls the Southern Gap Visitor Center home. The elk made the trip from Buchanan County to Richmond, helping the group showcase the county’s elk habitat and outdoor heritage to visitors from across Virginia (photo courtesy of SWVA).

Southern Gap welcomes Holston for historic inaugural game

THE GAME: Holston (0-0) at Southern Gap (0-0)
THE SETTING: Friday, Aug. 21, 2026, at 7 p.m. at the Red Robertson Athletic Complex at Southern Gap High School in Grundy.

HOLSTON: The Cavaliers are led by senior all-purpose back Eli Tweed, who averaged nearly 150 rushing yards per game in 2025. Tweed and senior running back Desmond Mickens give head coach Chris Akers a talented one-two punch in the backfield as Holston looks to build on last season's 6-5 record.

SOUTHERN GAP: The Eagles enter their inaugural season with plenty of depth and playmakers. Senior quarterback Ayden Whited will direct an offense featuring a talented group of backs, including Aidan Baker, Gunner Baker, Carson Blankenship and Brayden White, along with fullbacks R.J. Rowe and Caden Justice. Up front, Chase Baker will be counted on to lead the way on both sides of the ball.

FINAL WORD: History will be made Friday night when Southern Gap takes the field for the first football game in school history. With most Southwest Virginia teams not opening their seasons until Aug. 28, a capacity crowd is expected at the Red Robertson Athletic Complex as fans from across Buchanan County gather for the long-awaited debut of the Eagles.

Holston is coming off a 6-5 season and has a dangerous offensive weapon in Tweed. However, the Cavaliers must replace talented middle linebacker and fullback Collin Widener, who played an important role on both sides of the ball last season.

Southern Gap looked strong in its lone preseason scrimmage against Patrick Henry last Saturday. The Eagles displayed physicality, depth and several explosive playmakers in what served as an encouraging first look at the new program.

Holston should provide a solid opening test, but Southern Gap appears ready for the moment. With an energized home crowd behind them, I expect the Eagles to begin their historic first season with a convincing victory.

PREDICTION: Southern Gap 42, Holston 0.

ONE TEAM

FROM PAGE 1B

generations cheering for different schools and competing against one another.

On Saturday, old rivalries were put aside as everyone wore Southern Gap colors.

More than 40 players make up the first Eagles football team, giving Southern Gap a level of depth that became increasingly evident as the scrimmage continued.

Patrick Henry, coached by former Hurley head coach Austin Cooper, stood toe to toe with the Eagles during the opening format in which each team received 10 offensive plays. The Rebels stopped Southern Gap during its first series, but the Eagles responded.

"I think Patrick Henry showed a little toughness at first," Tester said. "I think we responded well after they stuffed us on that first series. We made some adjustments. Kids responded well. We just started playing well from there."

Southern Gap's offensive line, nicknamed the "War Pigs," began controlling the line of scrimmage and creating running lanes for the Eagles' collection of talented backs.

Aidan Baker scored the first touchdown in Southern Gap football history. Senior fullback R.J. Rowe later broke loose for another touchdown during the controlled portion of the scrimmage.

Tester praised the work of assistant coaches Anthony Church and Marcus Stiltner, along with the offensive linemen they have developed throughout preseason camp.

"Something I want to make note of is our offensive line," Tester said. "Our offensive line's done a great job, and we got a little bit of depth on the offensive line. Coach Church and Coach Stiltner have been putting those boys through it through camp. And I think they earned all the respect tonight because there's a bunch of holes in there for these backs."

After several 10-play series and a brief break, the teams played two live quarters.

Freshman Carson Blankenship scored Southern Gap's first touchdown during the live portion, putting the Eagles ahead 6-0.

The defense then forced a Patrick Henry punt, with Chase Baker helping Southern Gap shut down the Rebels' rushing attack.

The Eagles struck again when Aidan Baker broke free for a 31-yard touchdown run. Rowe also reached the end zone before leaving the scrimmage with a leg injury. Tester said the senior is an important leader for the Eagles and expressed hope that he would be able to return soon.

Fullback Caden "Pine Knot" Justice also found the end zone twice during Southern Gap's strong overall showing.

Tester had plenty of praise for Aidan Baker, who made an impact at running back and defensive end.

"Man, Aidan Baker's a dude," Tester said. "He gives 100% every play on both sides of the ball — and he's 'yes, sir, no, sir.' He's even a better kid off the field than he is on the field. And, you know, all those characteristics carry over. And like I said, he's one we're going to lean on a lot this season."

Baker was difficult for Patrick Henry to contain offensively and created problems from his defensive end position.

His younger brother, freshman Gunnar Baker, led the Eagles in tackles during his first live varsity action. Gunnar Baker and Blankenship are two young players expected to play important roles for Southern Gap during the next four seasons.

The Eagles' defense made a statement by keeping Patrick Henry's offense out of the end zone. Southern Gap held standout running back Jeb Stewart in check and continued making plays even as Tester rotated



Southern Gap quarterback Ayden Whited brings the Eagles' offense to the line of scrimmage near the goal line during Saturday's preseason scrimmage against Patrick Henry (Photo by Chad Cooper).

younger players into the lineup.

Blake Payne, Chase Yates and Devin Mullins were among the younger defensive backs who received valuable varsity experience. They are part of a secondary that includes seniors Ayden Whited and Brayden White.

Whited delivered a strong performance on both sides of the ball.

"I'm pleased with their physicality, how we come out and play, especially defensively," Tester said. "And, you know, the offense we run - the defense has got to carry us a little bit. But we got some things to work on. We'll take it one day at a time, one game at a time."

Cooper said the Rebels played well during the controlled portion of the scrimmage but struggled when the teams moved into live action.

"I thought we played really well during the first 10 play series," Cooper said. "Then during the live situation it kind of went downhill, but we just got to figure some things out up front. I mean, we're young, we're moving people around, but hopefully going into next Friday, we'll have a better front five set up."

Cooper said fatigue also became a factor for a Patrick Henry team relying heavily on 11 or 12 players.

He came away impressed with Southern Gap's strength at the line of scrimmage.

"They're physical, dude. They're physical up front," Cooper said. "I think they played really well. They do a great job of getting under, so we were overrunning things up front. They were doing a good job of getting under with traps and bellies, and I think they'll be fine."

The scrimmage carried an additional family connection. Cooper's father, Mark Cooper, is the first principal of Southern Gap High School.

Tester said he was proud of how quickly players from four former high schools have become one team.

"The kids overall, man, from camp, these kids have really come together and gelled well together," Tester said.

The victory will not count in the record book, but the evening provided Southern Gap players, coaches and fans with a first look at what Eagles football could become.

The next game will count.

Southern Gap will host Holston in the first regular-season football game in school history Friday, Aug. 21, at 7 p.m. Tester said the Eagles must quickly turn their attention toward a team led by veteran head coach Chris Akers.

"Coach Chris Akers, he always has his teams ready, and, you know, he'll be ready," Tester said. "So, we got to regroup and get back to work on Monday."



Southern Gap's Aidan Baker breaks loose for a touchdown during the Eagles' historic first football scrimmage at the Red Robinson Athletic Complex (Photo by Chad Cooper).

SWVA Sportsmen banquet set for Saturday

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

Outdoor enthusiasts from across the region will come together this Saturday, Aug. 22, for an evening of food, fellowship and fundraising during the SWVA Sportsmen Annual Banquet.

Doors will open at 3 p.m. for the annual event, which supports wildlife habitat, outdoor education and conservation efforts throughout Southwest Virginia.

The banquet will feature premium firearm raffles, outdoor prizes, games and other opportunities for guests to support the organization's work. A meal will also be served as sportsmen, families and conservation supporters gather to celebrate the region's outdoor heritage.

Organizers say the banquet is about more than having an enjoyable evening. Money raised through the event will help preserve land, protect wildlife, educate future generations and promote responsible outdoor recreation.

With its focus on preservation, education, wildlife, habitat enhancement and outdoor recreation, SWVA Sportsmen is working to ensure that Southwest Virginia's outdoor traditions continue for generations to come.

Tickets are \$30 for adults and \$15 for children ages 12 and younger.

Tickets may be purchased online at www.swvasportsmen.com or by calling 276-935-5903. A direct ticket link is also available at <https://secure.qgiv.com/event/2026swvasportsmenbanquet/>.

Organizers encourage residents to purchase their tickets and join them Saturday for an evening devoted to fellowship, conservation and building a lasting outdoor legacy in Southwest Virginia.

Grundy fire department secures \$28,000 grant for air packs

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

The Grundy Volunteer Fire Department has secured a \$28,000 grant to purchase 10 additional air packs, department Capt. Corey Viers told the Grundy Town Council during its Aug. 11 meeting.

Viers presented the department's monthly report because Fire Chief Bob Anderson was unable to attend the meeting.

Viers said he and Town of Grundy Finance Director Donna Smith worked together to secure the grant from the Thompson Foundation. The department is also waiting to hear whether it will receive two additional grants.

The funding will provide firefighters with vital breathing equipment used when entering burning buildings and other hazardous environments.

During July, the department responded to 13 calls, including five within the Town of Grundy and eight outside town limits.

Viers said the department's fire trucks underwent required pump testing during the month, and all of the trucks passed. Department members also joined the Grundy Police Department for the community's National Night Out event.

Firefighters recently completed a safety walk-through of the new Southern Gap High School, allowing members to become familiar with the building before it opens to students Aug. 21.

The department also moved its radio repeater to the Virginia State Police tower on Elkins Branch. Viers said the move will provide better radio service while saving the department approximately \$900 annually.

Viers also reminded council members that Aug. 12 marked the 79th anniversary of the Grundy Volunteer Fire Department's establishment.

The department is preparing for the arrival of its new fire truck. Viers said the final specifications are being completed and the truck is expected to arrive in late August or early September.

"We are excited and very appreciative," Viers said.

Once the truck arrives, the department plans to schedule a commissioning ceremony involving Buchanan County, the Town of Grundy and U.S. Sen. Mark Warner's office.

Viers also reported that four department members tested to become certified instructors Aug. 1. Those members were Shane Anderson, Ryan Clark, Wyatt Surber and Angel St. Clair.

Although the results had not been received at the time of the meeting, Viers said he was optimistic that all four would pass. If successful, the department would have 11 instructors.

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NEW ERA BEGINS

FROM PAGE 1B

officials are also reminding parents to complete required health paperwork before students arrive for the first day.

Under Virginia law, incoming kindergarten students must have a current school physical and required immunizations before entering school.

Students entering seventh grade must receive the Tdap and meningococcal vaccines before returning to school. The HPV vaccine is optional.

Students entering 12th grade must also receive the meningococcal vaccine before the school year begins.

Along with paperwork, families are making those traditional final back-to-school shopping trips for pencils, notebooks, binders, crayons and other classroom necessities.

Clear backpacks are not required during the regular school day. They are only required when attending school sporting events.

Below are the school supply lists for each Buchanan County Public School, organized by grade level:

- Council Elementary/Middle School**
- Pre-K
 - Change of clothes
 - Backpack
 - Kindergarten
 - Change of clothes
 - Large pencils
 - Regular pencils
 - Children's scissors
 - 2 boxes of 24-count colored pencils
 - Washable markers
 - 2 packs of large pink erasers
 - 1st Grade
 - Zippered pencil case
 - 2 packs of pencils
 - 1 pack of colored pencils
 - Children's scissors
 - 1 box of 24-count crayons
 - 10 glue sticks
 - 1 pack of Expo markers
 - 2 packs of large pink erasers
 - 1 pack of index cards
 - 1 single-subject notebook
 - 1 corded headphone
 - 2nd Grade
 - Zippered pencil case
 - 2 packs of colored pencils
 - 1 pair of children's scissors
 - 8 glue sticks
 - 2 boxes of 24-count colored pencils
 - 2 packs of large pink erasers
 - 1 corded headphone
 - 3rd Grade
 - Zippered pencil case
 - 2 three-ring binders
 - 2 packs of colored pencils
 - 2 packs of highlighters
 - 5 glue sticks
 - 4 large pink erasers
 - 2 binders
 - 2 wide-ruled composition books
 - 3 folders with pockets and prongs
 - 2 boxes of 24-count colored pencils
 - 1 corded over-the-ear headphone
 - 4th Grade
 - 1 box of 24-count colored pencils
 - Zipper pouch
 - 6 glue sticks
 - 1 pack of black dry-erase markers
 - 2 packs of large pink erasers
 - 2 wide-ruled composition books
 - 1 one-inch three-ring binder
 - 1 pack of highlighters
 - 5th Grade
 - 2 boxes of 24-count colored pencils
 - 2 boxes of crayons
 - 4 wide-ruled composition books
 - 1 pair of corded over-the-ear headphones
 - Scissors
 - 4 glue sticks
 - 2 notebooks
 - 2 packs of loose-leaf paper
 - 1 pack of black dry-erase markers
 - Small pencil sharpener
 - Zippered pencil case
 - 2 packs of No. 2 or mechanical pencils
 - 1 pack of ink pens (not black)
 - 6th Grade
 - 2 packs of loose-leaf paper
 - 1 pack of black dry-erase markers
 - 4 wide-ruled composition books
 - 2 packs of colored pencils
 - 4 glue sticks
 - Scissors
 - Small pencil sharpener
 - One three-ring pencil bag
 - 2 packs of No. 2 or mechanical pencils
 - 1 corded over-the-ear headphone
 - 1 pack of college-ruled paper
 - 1 science notebook with pocket folders
 - Zippered pencil case
 - 7th Grade
 - 1 civics notebook with pocket folders
 - Scissors
 - 2 packs of loose-leaf paper
 - 2 packs of colored pencils
 - Small pencil sharpener
 - 4 glue sticks
 - Zippered pencil case
 - 2 packs of No. 2 or mechanical pencils
 - 1 corded over-the-ear headphone
 - 1 pack of ink pens (not black)
 - One three-ring pencil bag
 - One two-inch three-ring binder

- Riverview Elementary/Middle School
 - Please label all supplies with your child's name unless otherwise noted. Teachers may request additional items after school begins if needed.

- Pre-K**
- Headphones
 - Extra clothes in a gallon-size Ziploc bag labeled with the child's name
- Kindergarten**
- 6 boxes of Crayola crayons
 - Pencils
 - 1 spiral notebook
 - Glue
 - Headphones
 - Extra clothes in a gallon-size Ziploc bag
- 1st Grade**
- 3 boxes of 24-count Crayola crayons
 - 2 pink erasers
 - Scissors
 - Headphones
 - Plastic pencil box
- 2nd & 3rd Grades**
- 1 pack of pencils
 - 1 pair of scissors
 - 1 pack of glue sticks
 - 1 pack of black dry-erase markers
 - Large pink erasers
 - 1 box of 24-count Crayola crayons
 - 1 pack of highlighters
 - Pencil pouch
- 4th Grade**
- 2-inch three-ring binder
 - Pencil pouch
 - Scissors
 - 10-pack of pencils
 - Package of Elmer's glue sticks
 - 2 boxes of 24-count Crayola crayons
 - Package of highlighters
 - Package of erasers
 - Package of dry-erase markers
 - 1 wide-ruled composition notebook for writing
 - 2 packs of wide-ruled notebook paper
 - 1 pack of binder dividers
 - 1 gallon-size Ziploc bag for extra supplies
- 5th Grade**
- 1.5-inch or 2-inch binder with dividers
 - Wide-ruled notebook paper
 - Pencils
 - Erasers
 - Colored pencils or crayons
 - 1 spiral notebook
 - 1 single-subject composition notebook, not spiral
- 6th Grade**
- Wide-ruled notebook paper
 - Pencils
 - 3-inch three-ring binder
 - Binder dividers
 - Colored pencils
 - Glue sticks
 - Pencil pouch for binder
 - Corded headphones
 - Spiral notebook
 - 7th Grade
 - College-ruled notebook paper
 - Pencils
 - Binder
 - Highlighters
 - Colored pencils
 - Binder dividers
 - Pencil pouch for binder

- Tommy P. Justus Elementary/Middle School**
- Pre-K**
- Change of clothes
- Kindergarten**
- 2 packs of wide-ruled paper
 - 1 pencil box
 - 2 packs of glue sticks
 - 2 packs of 16-count Crayola crayons
 - 1 pack of No. 2 pencils
 - Big pink erasers
 - 1 single-subject notebook
- 1st Grade**
- 1 box of 24-count Crayola crayons
 - 1 pack of glue sticks
 - 1 pack of pencils
 - Pencil box, not a pouch
 - 1 wide-ruled single-subject notebook
 - 1 pair of scissors
 - 2 packs of black dry-erase markers
 - Bookbag, no wheels
- 2nd Grade**
- Highlighters
 - Pencils
 - Pencil box
 - Glue sticks
 - Scissors
 - Crayons
 - Index cards
 - Red colored pencils
 - Dry-erase markers
 - 2 notebooks
- 3rd Grade**
- 1 three-ring binder
 - 1 pack of dividers
 - Crayons or colored pencils
 - Markers
 - Pencils
 - Glue sticks
 - 1 plastic folder
 - Wide-ruled paper

- 3 one-subject notebooks
- 4th Grade**
- 5 plastic pocket folders with prongs
 - 2 notebooks
 - Paper
 - Pencil box or pencil pouch
 - Pencils
 - Erasers
 - Glue sticks
 - Scissors
 - Highlighters
 - Crayons or colored pencils
 - Small pencil sharpener for colored pencils
- 5th/6th Grades**
- 3 packs of paper
 - 3 boxes of pencils
 - 1 one-inch three-ring binder
 - Dry-erase markers
 - Highlighters
 - Pencils
 - Colored pencils
- 7th Grade**
- 2 one-subject notebooks
 - 2 three-ring binders
 - Dry-erase markers
 - Highlighters
 - Pencils
 - Colored pencils

- Twin Valley Elementary/Middle School**
- Pre-K**
- Extra clothes in a Ziploc bag
- Kindergarten
- Large pencils
 - Small pencils
 - Glue sticks
 - Extra clothes in a Ziploc bag
 - Pencil box
 - Crayons
 - Backpack
- 1st Grade**
- No. 2 pencils
 - Pencil case
 - Scissors
 - Glue sticks
 - Crayons
 - Highlighters
 - Dry-erase markers
 - Backpack
- 2nd Grade**
- Composition notebook
 - Pencils
 - Pencil case
 - Scissors
 - Glue sticks
 - Water bottle
 - Backpack
- 3rd Grade**
- Pencils
 - Glue sticks
 - Crayons
 - Scissors
 - Dry-erase markers
 - Highlighters
 - Wide-ruled paper
 - Notebook
 - Pocket folders
 - Backpack
- 4th Grade**
- Pencils
 - Glue sticks
 - Crayons
 - Scissors
 - Pencil case
 - Colored pencils
 - Wide-ruled paper
 - Notebooks
 - Highlighters
 - Red pen
 - Folders

- 5th Grade**
- Wide-ruled paper
 - Mechanical pencils
 - Pencil case
 - Highlighters
 - Colored pencils
 - Glue sticks
 - Scissors
 - Blue pens
 - 3-inch three-ring binder
 - Pocket folder
- 6th Grade**
- Wide-ruled paper
 - Pencils
 - Notebooks
 - Dry-erase markers
 - Water bottle
 - Pocket folder
 - Pencil case
 - Colored pencils
- 7th Grade**
- Wide-ruled paper
 - Black dry-erase markers
 - Highlighters
 - Pencils
 - Three-ring binder
 - Water bottle
 - Notebooks
 - Colored pencils
 - Southern Gap High School
- Students attending Southern Gap High School should bring the following basic classroom supplies:**
- Wooden or mechanical pencils
 - Packs of ruled notebook paper
 - One- to two-inch three-ring binders
 - Composition books
 - Teachers may request additional supplies based on individual classes once the school year begins.



Adopt a Pet

Virginia Mountaineer

The dog days of summer can be ruff! This summer sidekick is a two-year-old female American Pit Bull Terrier. Her sleek coat is colored blue and white. She has round grey eyes and a cute black nose. Her personality is friendly, gentle and playful.

She is extremely sweet and affectionate. This beach babe will be available for adoption at the Buchanan County Animal Shelter until Monday, August 24, 2026.

Also available for adoption is this two-year-old male mixed breed. His short coat is colored white with reddish-brown spots and black freckles. He has bright, intelligent eyes and a curious expression. His temperament is happy and fun. The Buchanan County Animal Shelter is located at 1191 Dogpound Road. For more information about these animals, please call the shelter at 276-935-4067.

IDA BOARD

FROM PAGE 1B

County.

“I’m honored to be selected for the Buchanan County IDA board,” Sykes said. “My goal is simple: bring new businesses, create local jobs, keep our kids here, and grow the tax base so we can build a stronger community. I believe our best days are ahead.”

The appointments come as the Board of Supervisors continues considering another IDA appointment. Supervisors interviewed candidates for the position, which appeared on the Aug. 3 meeting agenda, but later voted to table the matter.

In other appointments, supervisors unanimously accepted Hess’ resignation from the Cumberland Plateau Regional Waste Management Authority and appointed Rose to take his place.

Dotson made the motion, and Adkins seconded it. The board approved the motion unanimously.

Supervisors also unanimously accepted the resignation of Billie Campbell III from the Southwest Regional Recreation Authority Board of Directors and appointed Rocklick District Supervisor Craig Stiltner to fill the vacancy. Adkins made the motion, and Garden District Supervisor Jeff Cooper seconded it.

GRUNDY FINANCES

FROM PAGE 1B

standards.

“First and foremost, the first thing is, we’ve gotten an unmodified opinion,” Crigger told council members. “We didn’t find any kind of issues. There’s no significant deficiencies.”

The audit’s schedule of findings and questioned costs reported no significant deficiencies or material weaknesses in the town’s internal financial controls. Auditors also found no material noncompliance affecting the financial statements.

No findings were reported relating to the town’s financial statements, federal awards or its compliance with Virginia laws, regulations, contracts and grants. The report also listed no findings from the previous year.

The town had no major federal programs subject to testing under the audit. The report listed \$750,000 as the threshold used to distinguish between Type A and Type B programs.

Grundy also qualified as a low-risk auditee under Section 530 of federal Uniform Guidance.

“You can go down this page and you can see, you know, the town right now is in pretty good shape,” Crigger said. “We didn’t come across anything that would raise any concerns.”

Crigger walked council members through the report’s different sections. He explained that the government-wide statements present the town’s overall financial position using generally accepted accounting principles, while the fund statements provide a closer look at activity within the town’s individual funds.

Although a significant amount of work goes into preparing and reviewing an audit, Crigger directed council members to the final page, which provided a summary of the findings.

The audit determined that Grundy’s internal financial controls were appropriate for a municipality of its size.

“You know, it’s a small town,” Crigger said. “Internal controls are good, you know, for the size that you are.”

When asked whether auditors made any adjustments during the process, Crigger said the only changes involved pension-related figures. Those amounts, including deferred inflows, deferred outflows and net pension assets, were obtained through actuarial reports prepared at the state level.

The figures reflect Grundy’s portion of the assets and liabilities associated with Consider clarifying as ‘the Virginia Retirement System, the state’s pension plan’ — but flag for reporter to confirm intended meaning. Crigger said no other audit adjustments were necessary.

He also credited Donna Smith, the Town of Grundy’s Finance Director among other roles, and the third-party firm responsible for the town’s pre-audit work with keeping its financial records in order and converting the town’s fund-accounting information into the format required under generally accepted accounting principles.

“Donna (Smith) does a good job,” Crigger said. “She’s good at what she does.”

Crigger told council members that Owens CPA remains available throughout the year to answer questions and provide additional information. He said the firm looks forward to serving the town again for its 2026 audit.

Grundy’s financial statements were fairly presented, its internal controls were functioning properly, and auditors found no issues requiring corrective action.

CLASSIFIEDS

AUCTIONS

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LEGAL NOTICES

VA ABC NOTICE
Full Name of owner:
Rudra Enterprise, LLC
Trading as:
Sonny's Quick Stop
1063 Contrary Creek Road, Rave, Buchanan County, VA 24639-8408
The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) AUTHORITY for a convenience grocery store, beer, wine, consumed off premises license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages.
Bipin Chaudhary, Owner.
Note: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at www.abc.virginia.gov or 800-552-3200.
VAM-08-20,27;2026

PUBLIC NOTICE
APPLICATION FOR RE-NEWAL/REISSUANCE OF COAL SURFACE MINING/ NPDES PERMIT NO. 1601787/0081787 UNDER CHAPTER 19, TITLE 45.2 OF THE CODE OF VIRGINIA
Publication Number: 26NXA01
Application Number: 1011932

The Black Diamond Company of 1073 Riverview Street, Grundy, VA 24614 is applying to the Virginia Mined Land Repurposing Program for renewal of Permit No. 1601787, to continue the operations at the following location:
The operation is in Buchanan County on Caney Fork and Buckeye Branch, approximately 2.4 miles southwest of Big Rock off Route 610 and 460. The permit is situated on the Harman USGS 7.5 Minute Topographic Quadrangle Map. The acreage for this operation is 344.29 acres. Drainage will pass through sediment control structures and will be discharged into Caney Fork and Dry Hollow near the VA/KY state line. The existing discharge locations may be viewed on the Renewal Map which is attached in Section 21.2 of the application. Additional discharge details are available in the NPDES Appli-

LEGAL NOTICES

cation attached in Section 5.15 of the application.
Any person with a valid legal interest which might be adversely affected by this proposal, or an officer or head of any federal, state or local government agency or authority, may within 30 days of September 10, 2026, submit written comments or objections concerning this application and may also request, in writing, that the Mined Land Repurposing Program hold an Informal Conference concerning this application. A copy of the application materials is available electronically for public inspection at <https://www.energy.virginia.gov/epinquiry/frmMain.aspx>
All correspondence concerning this application should be submitted to the Mined Land Repurposing Program (Attention: Permit Section), 3405 Mountain Empire Road, Big Stone Gap, Virginia 24219. Telephone (276) 523-8160. Written comments and a request for informal conference may be e-mailed to the Division at repurposingpublicnotice@energy.virginia.gov.
VAM 08-20,27, 09-3,10;2026

TRUSTEE'S SALE OF PROPERTY
1103 Knox Creek Drive, Hurley, VA 24620
Tax Map No. 2HH086065A, Acct. No. 19013

In execution of a Deed of Trust dated June 6, 2012, in the principal amount of \$118,134.11, recorded in the Clerk's Office of the Circuit Court of Buchanan County, Virginia, of record as Instrument Number 120001140, Woods Rogers PLC, Trustee will offer for sale at public auction outside the main entrance of the Buchanan County Circuit Court, 1012 Walnut Street, Grundy, VA 24614, on September 3, 2026 at 12:00 noon, the property described in said Deed of Trust lying in the County of Buchanan, Virginia, and more fully described as follows:
Being certain tract or parcel of land, located on Knox Creek in Buchanan County, Commonwealth of Virginia, commonly known as follows:
Tract No One containing one and half (1 ½) acre more or less, and being the same property conveyed by Noah H Blankenship from Henry Osborne and Wortha Osborne, his wife, and recorded in the Circuit Court Clerk's Office of Buchanan County, Commonwealth of Virginia, in Deed Book 74, page 551.
Pursuant to Section 8.9A-604 of the Virginia Code, a 2012 Norris Manufactured Home, Serial No. N02022028TNAB will be sold with the real property.
TERMS: Cash - Bidder's deposit of ten percent (10%) of the sales price by cashier's or certified check may be required. Balance of purchase price shall be due and payable not later than ten (10) days after sale.
WOODS ROGERS PLC, Trustee
For Information Contact: Woods Rogers Vandevanter Black PLC, P.O. Box 14125, Roanoke, VA 24038-4125,

LEGAL NOTICES

Telephone:
540-983-7729
VM-8-13,20,27;2026

Public Notice
Application for Bond Reduction Under Chapter 19, Title 45.2 Code of Virginia'
PUBLICATION NUMBER: APPLICATION NUMBER:1011886

Jewell Valley Mining LLC is applying for bond reduction on Permit No.1202301 located in Buchanan County 4.2 MILES SW OF VANSANT ON PAWPAW CREEK. This permit consists of 14.82 acres bonded under Cost Estimate. As provided by 4VAC25-130-800.40 of the Virginia Coal Surface Mining Reclamation Regulations, the Applicant is requesting that the current total bond amount of \$414,100.00 in the form of insurance surety posted for this permit be reduced by \$248,600.00. This bond reduction request is based on the following Phase I reclamation: All backfill and re-grading completed per approved settlement agreement.
Any person with a valid legal interest which might be adversely affected by this proposal, or an officer or head of any federal, state or local government agency or authority, may within 30 days of August 27, 2026, submit written comments or objections concerning this bond reduction, and may also request, in writing, that the Mined Land Repurposing Program hold an Informal Conference concerning this application. A copy of the application materials is available electronically for public inspection at <https://www.energy.virginia.gov/dmlrinquiry/frmMain.aspx?ctl=4>.
All correspondence concerning this application should be submitted to the Mined Land Repurposing Program (Attention: Permit Section), 3405 Mountain Empire Road, Big Stone Gap, Virginia 24219. Telephone (276) 523-8160. Written comments and a request for informal conference may be e-mailed to repurposingpublicnotice@energy.virginia.gov.
VAM-08-6,13,20,27;2026

Public Notice
Application for Bond Reduction Under Chapter 19, Title 45.2 Code of Virginia'
PUBLICATION NUMBER: APPLICATION NUMBER:1011887

Jewell Valley Mining LLC is applying for bond reduction on Permit No.1202304 located in Buchanan County 1.3 MILES NW OF WHITEWOOD ON MILL BRANCH. This permit consists of 20.38 acres bonded under Cost Estimate. As provided by 4VAC25-130-800.40 of the Virginia Coal Surface Mining Reclamation Regulations, the Applicant is requesting that the current total bond amount of \$325,000.00 in the form of insurance surety posted for this permit be reduced by \$

LEGAL NOTICES

195,000.00.
This bond reduction request is based on the following Phase I reclamation: All backfill and re-grading completed per approved settlement agreement.
Any person with a valid legal interest which might be adversely affected by this proposal, or an officer or head of any federal, state or local government agency or authority, may within 30 days of August 27, 2026, submit written comments or objections concerning this bond reduction, and may also request, in writing, that the Mined Land Repurposing Program hold an Informal Conference concerning this application. A copy of the application materials is available electronically for public inspection at <https://www.energy.virginia.gov/dmlrinquiry/frmMain.aspx?ctl=4>.
All correspondence concerning this application should be submitted to the Mined Land Repurposing Program (Attention: Permit Section), 3405 Mountain Empire Road, Big Stone Gap, Virginia 24219. Telephone (276) 523-8160. Written comments and a request for informal conference may be e-mailed to repurposingpublicnotice@energy.virginia.gov.
VAM-08,6,13,20,27;2026

Public Notice
Application for Bond Reduction Under Chapter 19, Title 45.2 Code of Virginia'
PUBLICATION NUMBER: APPLICATION NUMBER:1011888

Jewell Valley Mining LLC is applying for bond reduction on Permit No.1702302 located in Buchanan County JONES FK OF JEWELL VALLEY OFF ST RT 613. This permit consists of 196.03 acres bonded under Cost Estimate. As provided by 4VAC25-130-800.40 of the Virginia Coal Surface Mining Reclamation Regulations, the Applicant is requesting that the current total bond amount of \$1,828,900.00 in the form of insurance surety posted for this permit be reduced by \$ 1,097,340.00. This bond reduction request is based on the following Phase I reclamation: All backfill and re-grading completed per approved

LEGAL NOTICES

settlement agreement.
Any person with a valid legal interest which might be adversely affected by this proposal, or an officer or head of any federal, state or local government agency or authority, may within 30 days of August 27, 2026, submit written comments or objections concerning this bond reduction, and may also request, in writing, that the Mined Land Repurposing Program hold an Informal Conference concerning this application. A copy of the application materials is available

LEGAL NOTICES

electronically for public inspection at <https://www.energy.virginia.gov/dmlrinquiry/frmMain.aspx?ctl=4>. All correspondence concerning this application should be submitted to the Mined Land Repurposing Program (Attention: Permit Section), 3405 Mountain Empire Road, Big Stone Gap, Virginia 24219. Telephone (276) 523-8160. Written comments and a request for informal conference may be e-mailed to repurposingpublicnotice@energy.virginia.gov.
VAM-08-6,13,20,27;2026

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NOTICE

Buchanan County School Board



The Buchanan County School Board is accepting applications for the following position(s):
Custodian

Deadline: August 21, 2026 at 8:00 a.m.
Interested person(s) may print a Support Application from our website at www.bcpsk12.com or call to have an application sent to you. Return the completed application to Becky Harrison. 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.

PUBLIC NOTICE

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Buchanan County, Virginia

RE: TO PROVIDE EIGHT GENERATORS: FIVE 600 AMP TRANSFER SWITCHES; THREE 400 AMP TRANSFER SWITCHES AND START UP SERVICES

Buchanan County, Va. Board of Supervisors is requesting PROPOSALS to provide eight generators; five 600-amp transfer switches; three 400-amp transfer switches; and start up services. The County intends that the eight generators will be installed at the following locations: Harman Gym; Big Rock Gym; Poplar Gap Gym; the Trey Adkins Athletic Center in Hurley, Va.; Council Community Center; Whitewood Community Center; JM Bevins Community Center and the Russell Prater Community Center.

If you are interested in submitting a PROPOSAL, please make your request for the Request for Proposal document which includes information on the County's submittal requirements from:

Robert Craig Horn, County Administrator
County Administrator
Third Floor, Buchanan County Government Center
4777 Slate Creek Road, Suite 310, Grundy, Va. 24614
Buchanan County, Virginia
P.O. Drawer 950
Grundy, Virginia 24614
(276) 935-6508

To be considered for this project, please send a proposal (one original suitable for coping and five copies) to the Buchanan County Administrator's Office, Attn: Sandy Stiltner, P. O. Drawer 950, Grundy, Virginia 24614 or delivered to the County Administrator Office on the third floor, Buchanan County Government Center, 4447 Slate Creek Road, Grundy, Va. 24614 by 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday, September 8th, 2026.

After the PROPOSALS are reviewed, the county will deem which company is best qualified for a more detailed discussion of the project and negotiation of contract details.

The Buchanan County, Va. Board of Supervisors is an Equal Opportunity Employer and will not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, national origin, age or handicap. Minority and female-owned firms are encouraged to participate.

By:
Robert Craig Horn
County Administrator

NOTICE

Buchanan County School Board



The Buchanan County School Board is accepting applications for the following position(s):
Building Engineer

Deadline: August 21, 2026 at 8:00 a.m.
Interested person(s) may print a Support Application from our website at www.bcpsk12.com or call to have an application sent to you. Return the completed application to Becky Harrison. 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.

Buchanan County approves LDSS bonuses, changes mineral tax return requirements

By CHAD COOPER
coopkam@gmail.com

The Buchanan County Board of Supervisors approved one-time bonuses for employees of the Buchanan County Department of Social Services during its Aug. 3 meeting at the Buchanan County Government Center on Slate Creek.

Board Chairman Tim Hess, who represents the Hurricane District, opened a public hearing on an ordinance authorizing a one-time bonus equal to 2% of each eligible employee's base salary.

No members of the public spoke during the hearing.

North Grundy District Supervisor Lee Dotson made the motion to approve the bonus ordinance, and Knox District Supervisor Trey Adkins seconded it. It was unanimously approved by the board.

The bonuses are supported primarily through state funding designated for local Department of Social Services personnel and fringe-benefit costs.

The Commonwealth of Virginia is providing \$68,229.65 toward the bonuses, while Buchanan County will contribute \$4,295. The combined funding totals \$72,524.65.

The board initially adopted the ordinance on an emergency basis June 8. The Aug. 3 public hearing was required before the ordinance could be adopted permanently. Although the ordinance is permanent,

it authorizes only a one-time bonus and does not create a recurring salary increase.

Under Section 15.2-1508 of the Code of Virginia, a locality must have an ordinance in place before its governing body can provide bonus payments to local employees.

The bonuses must be paid and reimbursed as part of the 2025-26 fiscal year.

In other business, the board held a public hearing on a proposed amendment to Chapter 88, Taxation, of the Buchanan County Code. The change amends Section 88-32, which governs tax returns filed by coal producers and businesses that extract oil or natural gas in the county.

No one spoke during that public hearing.

After the hearing was closed, Rocklick District Supervisor Craig Stiltner made the motion to adopt the amendment. Following a second, the board approved the change unanimously.

Coal, oil and natural gas producers are required to file a return with the Buchanan County Commissioner of the Revenue by the 20th day of each month. The return must report information from the preceding month, including the amount of coal, oil or gas produced, gross receipts and any deductions used to calculate those receipts.

The amendment addresses situations in which a taxpayer, despite

making a reasonable effort, cannot obtain accurate production, sales or tax figures before the filing deadline.

In those cases, the taxpayer must still file a return by the deadline using estimated figures. A business may report zero production, zero gross receipts or no tax liability solely to comply with the filing requirement.

The taxpayer must then amend the return with accurate information as soon as reasonably possible. The amended return must be filed no later than 90 days after the original deadline or within 10 days after the taxpayer receives the information needed to complete it accurately, whichever comes first.

A return based on estimates or zero figures will be considered incomplete until it is properly amended. Failure to submit the amended return on time may result in penalties, interest or other enforcement measures.

The change does not extend the deadline for paying taxes. Any additional tax found to be owed after a return is amended may still be subject to applicable interest and penalties.

If the regular filing deadline falls on a Saturday, Sunday, legal holiday or another day when the county courthouse is closed, the deadline will move to the next day the Commissioner of the Revenue's Office is open.

Southern Gap High School to celebrate opening with ribbon-cutting

By CHAD COOPER
coopkam@gmail.com

A historic new chapter in Buchanan County education will be celebrated later this month when Southern Gap High School holds its official ribbon-cutting ceremony and open house.

The ceremony is scheduled for Saturday, Aug. 29, at 10:30 a.m. at the new school, located at 2021 Eagle Drive in the Southern Gap section of Buchanan County.

The event will give students, families and community members an opportunity to gather and celebrate the completion of a 200,000-square-foot school that will bring together students from across Buchanan County under one roof.

Southern Gap High School is opening for the 2026-27 academic year following the closure of Council, Grundy, Hurley and Twin Valley high schools. The new school will serve students in grades eight through 12 and become Buchanan County's only high school.

For generations, the county's communities cheered for their own teams and built traditions inside their local schools. Southern Gap now begins the process of bringing those histories together while creating a new identity as the home of the Eagles.

The ribbon-cutting will formally recognize the opening of the new school and the years of planning, construction and work that went into making the project a reality. The open house will also allow residents to see the completed facility and experience the new educational setting created for the county's students.

Southern Gap's first official school day is Friday, Aug. 21, making the Aug. 29 ceremony another milestone during the school's historic opening year.

Those planning to attend are asked to RSVP to Sherry Fletcher by calling 276-935-4551 or emailing Sherry.Fletcher@bcpsk12.com.

Smith proposes veterans memorial in downtown Grundy

By CHAD COOPER
coopkam@gmail.com

Longtime Buchanan County educator Ken Smith is asking town and county leaders to work together to create a visible memorial honoring local men and women who served and died in the nation's wars.

Smith presented the idea during the Grundy Town Council's regular meeting Aug. 11. His proposal calls for placing the memorial in the grassy area near the traffic light beside the Grundy Community Center.

"Most every community around here, some size, has a war veterans kind of a monument park or something," Smith told council members. "Not necessarily real big or anything like that, but something."

Smith, a former history and government teacher with Buchanan County Public Schools, said he previously discussed the proposal with the Buchanan County Board of Supervisors during its Aug. 3 meeting. He encouraged the town and county to work together to develop an appropriate memorial.

Smith said veterans were once honored during annual Fourth of July programs near the Buchanan County Courthouse. His father and other members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars participated in ceremonies recognizing local service members who

were killed during wartime.

"Before we were a twinkle in anybody's eye, those men and women fought and died for us," Smith said. "They need to be somewhere."

Smith recalled attending funeral services with VFW members for Buchanan County servicemen killed during the Vietnam War. He said those experiences stayed with him and helped shape his desire to ensure that the county's veterans are remembered.

"All of them need to be remembered," Smith said.

Among those represented on an existing marker are Gentry and Childs, the two veterans for whom the local VFW post is named. Smith said the marker deserves to be placed in a prominent location where it can be seen and treated with respect.

"You know, down at the courthouse is fine, but they need seen, they remembered," he said.

Smith believes the grassy area beside the Grundy Community Center would provide a fitting location because of its visibility and connection to the community. American flags are also displayed in the area during patriotic observances.

"The red light would be the right spot, because they all came through," Smith said. "Even the guys from the War Between the States came through Grundy Courthouse."



Longtime Buchanan County educator Ken Smith addresses the Grundy Town Council during its Tuesday, Aug. 11, 2026 meeting about his proposal to create a veterans memorial in the grassy area near the traffic light beside the Grundy Community Center (photo by Chad Cooper).

Smith emphasized that he is not seeking money or asking to manage the project. He said he simply wants to encourage local officials to consider the idea and find a respectful way to honor those who served.

"I don't want no money," Smith said. "I don't want to be no project person or anything like that. I'm just being the old government history teacher person."

Smith said the memorial would not need to be large or elaborate. Instead, he envisions a tasteful and accessible site that could serve as the centerpiece of the town's patriotic displays.

"I don't want it to be a monstrosity on the mountain," he said.

In addition to the veterans memorial, Smith raised several other historical matters for the town to consider. He asked about the former location of a Sons of Confederate Veterans display that had been near the community center and whether it could be returned.

Smith, a member of the local Sons of Confederate Veterans organization, also asked what happened to historical items that were housed at the former Grundy airport before the old building was demolished.

He also suggested creating some form of recognition for the Grundy Squadron of the Civil Air Patrol. Smith said the squadron was ranked the top unit in the Virginia Wing in 1991 and that former members have asked why the accomplishment has never been publicly recognized.

Local business fairs to welcome ASL and ACP students

By CHAD COOPER
coopkam@gmail.com

Students at two of Buchanan County's higher education institutions will have an opportunity to connect with the community during upcoming business fairs at the Appalachian School of Law and Appalachian College of Pharmacy.

The events are designed to welcome students to their respective schools while introducing them to the businesses, organizations and services available throughout Buchanan County. They also give local organizations an opportunity to show students what the county has to offer during their time here — and what could encourage them to remain in the area after graduation.

The Appalachian School of Law will host its Business Fair and Welcome Back Luncheon from noon to 1:30 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 25. The event will be held in the courtyard and Lions Lounge inside the school's main building in Grundy.

Local businesses and organizations interested in reserving a table at the ASL event should contact Patty Street at 276-244-1215 or plester@asl.edu by Aug. 20.

The Appalachian College of Pharmacy will hold its annual Business and Services Fair from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 3, in the Garden Hall Gymnasium at the college's Oakwood campus.

The pharmacy college's event will highlight businesses and services available in the local area, helping students become more familiar with the community they will call home while completing their education.

Businesses and organizations interested in participating in the pharmacy fair should RSVP to Donna Horn at dhorn@acp.edu by Aug. 31.

Colley asks supervisors to consider tax relief for senior citizens

By CHAD COOPER
coopkam@gmail.com

A Buchanan County resident asked county leaders to consider providing additional tax relief for senior citizens as a countywide property reassessment moves forward.

Terry Colley, who also serves on the Buchanan County Public Service Authority board, addressed the Buchanan County Board of Supervisors during its Aug. 3 regular meeting. Colley spoke as a county resident and asked the board to explore an exemption for residents 55 and older when the county's tax rate is next considered.

Colley said the current tax rate is 39 cents and asked supervisors to consider keeping the rate down for older residents following the reassessment.

"If you know the grocery prices and the insurance prices and everything in this county, it's a struggle for those who's on Social Security," Colley said.

Colley told supervisors that providing relief would demonstrate the county's support for senior citizens living on limited or fixed incomes.

"It would be a great feather in y'all's hat if you did that to keep their rate down," he said.

Moise told Colley and the board that the county's reassessment is underway and is scheduled to take effect Jan. 1, 2027.

Knox District Supervisor Trey Adkins asked Moise to research state law and determine what authority the county has, along with what options might be available.

Moise said the county could review its existing exemptions for senior citizens to determine whether any changes or additional relief could be offered.

Colley noted that qualifying veterans already receive certain property tax exemptions and asked supervisors to give similar consideration to the county's senior citizens.

The board took no formal action on Colley's request. Moise said he would research the matter and report on what options may be legally available.



BOOK RELEASE

GRUNDY TIES MARK DEBUT POETRY COLLECTION RELEASE

Tiffany Jade McNeely, a former Grundy resident and 1995 graduate of Haysi High School, has released her debut poetry collection, *Poetry Obscura*.

McNeely and her husband, **Anthony Allison**, a 1994 graduate of Grundy High School, maintain strong ties to the community. Together, they founded Clovia Press to support independent authors and bring new voices to readers.

Poetry Obscura is a deeply personal collection, featuring poems and prose McNeely wrote and kept private over many years. Many of the pieces were shaped during times when poetry became her only way to express what could not be said aloud. With this release, she shares that work publicly for the first time.

For more information, visit www.clovia-press.com.