



PLAZA ECONOMY DRUG

1123 Plaza Drive • Grundy, VA
Located in the Grundy Plaza

Mon-Fri: 9a.m.-6p.m. | Sat-Sun: Closed

276-935-9406



THE VIRGINIA MOUNTAINEER

The Voice of Buchanan County Since 1922
 www.virginiamountaineer.com

VOL. 104 NO. 38
GRUNDY, VA. | THURSDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2026
TWO SECTIONS PLUS SUPPLEMENTS | \$2

FEMA approves more than \$200,000 for county culvert repairs

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

Buchanan County will receive more than \$200,000 in federal disaster assistance to repair or replace culverts damaged by severe winter storms and flooding, the Federal Emergency Management Agency announced.

The funding will help cover the county’s recovery costs for damaged drainage infrastructure. It is part of more than \$9 million FEMA approved for disaster recovery and projects intended to reduce future damage in Virgin-

ia and West Virginia.

FEMA’s announcement did not identify the locations of the Buchanan County culverts, how many need repairs or replacement, or a timetable for the work. It also did not specify which winter storms and flooding events caused the damage.

The county’s award comes through FEMA’s Public Assistance program, which helps state and local governments recover from disasters. Eligible work includes repairs to public infrastructure and buildings, road restoration and reimbursement for emergency mea-

sures taken to protect public health and safety.

The latest announcement approved nearly \$7.5 million in Public Assistance funding across Virginia.

That total includes more than \$3.5 million for the Virginia Department of Transportation to cover emergency protective measures related to Hurricane Helene. VDOT will also receive more than \$1 million for permanent repairs to gravel roads and culverts damaged by the hurricane.

SEE **FEMA APPROVES** | 2A



VCEDA Executive Director/General Counsel Jonathan Belcher (right) presents a ceremonial check for \$250,000 to Buchanan County Administrator Craig Horn (center) for the Buchanan County IDA to use toward planning and design of a new water tank to serve the Southern Gap area. Also pictured on the left is Terra Tech Engineer Billie Campbell (Contributed photo).

\$250,000 grant supports plans for second Southern Gap water tank

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

A planned second water tank at Southern Gap moved a step closer with approval of a \$250,000 grant to help prepare the project as demand for water increases.

The Virginia Coalfield Economic Development Authority approved the funding for the Buchanan County Industrial Development Authority to cover planning, design, engineering, permitting and related costs.

The proposed 1-million-gallon tank would serve Southern Gap and the planned Breaks

Regional Airport development. According to the IDA’s funding application, the existing 500,000-gallon tank on Airport Road cannot meet household water needs and firefighting demands when Southern Gap is fully developed.

“The IDA has determined that the development of Southern Gap has reached the necessary levels that a second municipal water tank is needed within the development site to provide the necessary domestic and fire-flow water supply for the continued development of

SEE **\$250,000 GRANT** | 2A



Children search for small crabs in a sandbox during Family Ag Day in Grundy. The activity was among several hands-on attractions offered at the Oct. 3 event. Photo by Jerry Ward.

Families turn out for Ag Day despite wet weather

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

Cloudy skies and wet weather did little to dampen the fun Saturday, Oct. 3, as area residents gathered for the fourth annual Family Ag Day at the Grundy Community Center movie theater parking lot.

The free event, presented by the Big Sandy Soil and Water Conservation District, gave visitors of all ages a chance to see and touch farm animals, enjoy free refreshments and take part in games and hands-on activities.

“It was a great day considering the weather; we had

SEE **FAMILIES TURN OUT** | 2A

7-year-old shot in leg outside Oakwood store

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

A 7-year-old child was flown to a trauma center after being shot in the leg inside a vehicle outside the Dollar General store in Oakwood on Oct. 1, according to Buchanan County Sheriff Allen W. Boyd.

In a statement released after the shooting, Boyd said a preliminary investigation found that the child retrieved a handgun

while a parent was inside the store. The gun discharged, striking the child in the leg.

The sheriff’s office received a 911 call at about 9:11 p.m. Deputies were the first emergency responders to arrive and immediately provided medical assistance, applying a tourniquet to the child’s leg to control the bleeding.

SEE **7-YEAR-OLD SHOT** | 2A



The Dollar General store in Oakwood, where a 7-year-old child was shot in the leg inside a parked vehicle Oct. 1, according to the Buchanan County Sheriff’s Office. The incident remains under investigation.

Find us on
 


ADVERTISE
YOUR BUSINESS HERE.




Call Wendi Craig - 276-340-2445

or email: advertise@mainstreetnewspapers.com

Grant to support suicide prevention efforts for area veterans

By CHAD COOPER
coopkam@gmail.com

Veterans and their families in Buchanan County are among those who will be served by a \$512,053 federal grant aimed at strengthening suicide prevention efforts and connecting people with mental health support.

Westcare Kentucky Inc. will receive the funding to serve an area that includes Buchanan, Dickenson and Wise counties, U.S. Sens. Mark Warner and Tim Kaine announced. The award is part of more than \$4.1 million going to eight organizations serving Virginia.

The grants will support community organizations that help veterans and their families find mental health resources, outreach programs, suicide prevention services and other assistance. The Westcare award covers the three-county service area rather than a separate allocation for Buchanan County.

“Veterans deserve to know that help is there when they need it. It is our responsibility as lawmakers to make sure that those who have sacrificed for our country are not left to suffer silently and have the support and resources that they’ve earned and are owed,” the senators said in a joint statement.

“We’re proud to have helped create this program, which is delivering critical resources to organizations on the ground working with veterans. These federal dollars will help expand lifesaving suicide prevention efforts and ensure more Virginia veterans and their families can get the support they’ve earned.”

The funding comes through the Staff Sergeant Parker

Gordon Fox Suicide Prevention Grant Program, which supports community efforts to reach veterans and connect them with services available through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and local organizations.

For Buchanan County, the award brings the state-wide initiative to an organization serving veterans in Southwest Virginia. The announcement did not identify how much of Westcare’s grant would be spent in each county or provide a schedule for local outreach.

The grant program grew out of the bipartisan IM-PROVE Wellbeing for Veterans Act, legislation Warner led in 2019 and Kaine supported. The measure sought to improve coordination of veterans’ mental health and suicide prevention services and better measure how well those efforts work.

It became law as part of the Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act in 2020. Warner introduced bipartisan legislation in February 2025 to renew and expand the grant program and testified before the Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs that June in support of its extension.

Other awards announced by the senators will support organizations serving veterans in Northern Virginia, Hampton Roads and additional communities across the state.

Veterans experiencing a crisis, or anyone concerned about a veteran, can reach the Veterans Crisis Line by dialing 988 and pressing 1, texting 838255 or chatting online at VeteransCrisisLine.net/ Chat.

The service offers free, confidential support 24 hours a day. Veterans do not have to be enrolled in VA benefits or health care to receive help.

FAMILIES TURN OUT

FROM PAGE 1A

a good turnout,” Big Sandy Soil and Water Conservation District manager and educational specialist Jeanne Presley said. “Thank you to everyone who made this day possible, including all the awesome volunteers from Appalachian School of Law and Appalachian College of Pharmacy including Dr. Hillary Deskins and her amazing students. We had several turkeys, some rabbits and chickens for our contests. A great day to learn about agriculture.”

For children, there was plenty to keep little hands busy. They rode miniature tractors, had their faces painted and searched for prizes in a tub filled with plastic balls. A sandbox offered another treasure hunt, with small crabs and seashells waiting to be discovered.

Children could even try their hand at milking a wooden cow, adding a playful farm lesson to the afternoon.

Prized turkeys and rabbits were among the livestock

on hand, drawing attention from young visitors and adults alike. The chance to touch the animals gave families a closer look at a part of farm life they might not encounter every day.

State Sen. Todd Pillion was among those in the crowd and praised the work behind the event.

“It’s great to be at the Ag and Family Day in Grundy. I appreciate all the hard work Bobby Looney and the Soil and Water District put into it. Enjoyed up here and watching the turkeys and seeing all the farm people of Buchanan County,” Pillion said.

Congressman Morgan Griffith also made the trip to Buchanan County for the event.

Despite the weather, families made their way through the activities, sharing an afternoon of games, animals and time together. Now in its fourth year, Family Ag Day brought agriculture into the heart of Grundy, with opportunities to learn mixed into the fun.



Hurley resident Susie Wolford spends time with rabbits during Family Ag Day. The free event gave visitors of all ages a chance to see and touch farm animals. Photo by Jerry Ward.



From left, Nathan Wolford, state Sen. Todd Pillion and Big Sandy Soil and Water Conservation District Director Bobby Looney gather at a table during the fourth annual Family Ag Day in Grundy. Photo courtesy of Todd Pillion's Facebook page.

Free RAM clinic coming to Riverview Oct. 17-18

By CHAD COOPER
coopkam@gmail.com

Residents needing dental work, an eye exam or medical care will have an opportunity to receive free services when Remote Area Medical brings a two-day clinic to Riverview Elementary/Middle School Oct. 17-18.

The Buchanan County School Board unanimously approved closing Riverview to students Oct. 16 to accommodate the clinic. North Grundy District member Angie McClanahan made the motion during the board’s Sept. 15 meeting, and Knox District member Tommy Blankenship seconded it.

The clinic will be held at the school, located at 27382 Riverside Drive in Grundy. Services will be provided on a first-come, first-served basis until capacity is reached. No identification is required.

The parking lot will open at 11:59 p.m. Friday, Oct. 16. The clinic will open at 6 a.m. Saturday and Sunday.

Available dental services include cleanings, fillings, extractions and dental X-rays.

Vision services include complete eye exams, eye health evaluations and prescription glasses made on-site.

Medical services include physical exams, prescription consultations, women’s health services and general exams.

The event gives people who need care a chance to address health concerns without the cost of a visit, whether they need a tooth treated, their vision checked or a medical examination.

For more information, visit ramusa.org or call 865-579-1530.

7-YEAR-OLD SHOT

FROM PAGE 1A

Oakwood Fire and Rescue also responded, and MedFlight was called. The child was flown to the trauma center at Johnson City Medical Center for treatment. No update on the child’s condition was included in the statement.

Investigators determined that the parent had left the 7-year-old and two younger children in the vehicle while entering the store, according to Boyd.

The sheriff’s office continues to investigate and is withholding the names of those involved.

“Charges are anticipated as the investigation continues,” Boyd said in the statement.

The statement did not identify who could face charges or specify what charges might be filed.

FEMA APPROVES

FROM PAGE 1A

FEMA identified Buchanan County’s culvert funding separately as assistance for damage caused by severe winter storms and flooding.

Along with the recovery awards, FEMA approved more than \$2 million through its Hazard Mitigation Grant Program for projects in Virginia and West Virginia intended to prevent or reduce damage from future disasters.

Those awards include nearly \$550,000 to update Virginia’s Richmond-Crater Multi-Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan. The update will help participating communities identify disaster risks and ways to reduce them, according to FEMA.

In West Virginia, nearly \$450,000 was approved to acquire and demolish three flood-prone structures in Marion County. FEMA said removing the structures will reduce the potential for future loss of life and property.

The mitigation program also supports projects such as elevating buildings, improving drainage, upgrading utilities and infrastructure, and acquiring properties in areas vulnerable to repeated disasters.

FEMA said it works directly with states on mitigation projects and distributes recovery funding through state and local governments.

\$250,000 GRANT

FROM PAGE 1A

Southern Gap,” said Jonathan Belcher, VCEDA’s executive director and general counsel.

Plans call for the new tank to be built beside the existing tank on Airport Road. Once built, it would transfer to the Buchanan County Public Service Authority for permanent operation.

Newly appointed Buchanan County Economic Development Director Jeremy Ward said the project will help provide the infrastructure needed to support continued growth.

“As we continue to expand upon the Southern Gap Development, we want to ensure we have the proper capabilities to provide such critical infrastructure as municipal water,” Ward said. “This project is essential for the current and future developments at Southern Gap, as well as the future Breaks Regional Airport.”

The announcement did not include a construction timeline or an estimated total project cost.

Created by the Virginia General Assembly in 1988, VCEDA supports economic development and job creation across seven Southwest Virginia counties and the city of Norton. It funds its work with a portion of coal and natural gas severance taxes paid by companies operating in the region.



LOOKING BACK

From our files

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

55 YEARS AGO

OCT 7, 1971

The junior class of Hurley High School met September 24th in the school auditorium and nominated candidates for officers, who were elected on Monday, September 27th. Elected were Joann Mullins, president; Diana Johnson, vice president; Terrie Tester, secretary-treasurer; Diana Helton, reporter and SCA Representative; Ronnie Stiltner. The meeting also covered class dues and ideas for raising money for prom and the senior trip.

Hurley Rebels tailback Teddy Hipps led a last-minute one-person campaign in the fourth period, scoring his second touchdown of the night on a 60-yard run to turn a two-point Hurley deficit into a 12-8 victory over Haysi in football action Friday night at Haysi.

45 YEARS AGO

OCTOBER 8, 1981

Garden Elementary held its Little Miss Pageants last week in the high school gym. Little Miss Kindergarten is Lisa Perkins, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Eulys Perkins. First runner-up was Stephenie Hinkle, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Monroe Hinkle. Second runner-up was Christine Shortridge, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Clayton Shortridge. Pam Clendenin was chosen as Little Miss GES. She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Wesley Clendenin. Barbara Clendenin, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Forrest Clendenin, placed first, and Melinda Dye, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Quinton Dye, was second runner-up. The new Little Miss Garden Elementary is Laura Proffit. First runner-up was Debbie Blankenship, and Michelle Ramsey was second runner-up.

Grundy Wavettes pulled out a close one with Tazewell Thursday night to take a 59-52 decision in Southwest District girls basketball play. Kelly Vandyke made 19 points for the Wavettes, and Tracy Fletcher was credited with 18 points and 21 rebounds in the win.

35 YEARS AGO

OCTOBER 10, 1991

Buchanan County voters have a choice in all constitutional offices up for grabs on Nov. 5, except Commonwealth Attorney. Both Democrat and Republican candidates have announced for each office voters have to consider. In the Circuit Court Clerk race, Democrat James M. "Jim" Bunn will square off against Republican candidate Phillip C. Justice.

Jill Suzanne Viers has been nominated for inclusion in the 25th annual edition of Who's Who Among American High School Students. Jill is a senior at Grundy Senior High School and is the daughter of Cecil and Eula Viers of Vansant.

Council won both the boys' and girls' meet in BDD cross country action Wednesday afternoon at William P. Harris Park in Council. Shannon Breeding won the boys' meet in 18:43, while Haley Arrington led the girls' meet in 22:28. Council claimed the top five boys' spots and eight of the top nine. Among the girls, Council claimed four of the top nine spots, edging Haysi in team points.

Twin Valley picked up its first BDD win in four tries and evened its overall record at 5-5 with a five-set victory over Council Tuesday evening at Council Elementary School. A consistent service game, led by senior Carrie Mounts, carried Twin Valley. Mounts got nine straight points to lead the Lady Panthers to a win in game one.

A visit from 'Washington' brings history to life

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

David Winship came to Buchanan County to help children learn about the nation's beginnings. Along the way, the retired educator discovered a place he wants to visit again.

Portraying George Washington, Winship spoke to more than 1,000 children at the county's four elementary and middle schools during a September program arranged by the Levisa River Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

His subject was the Constitution — why it was created, how it works and why the generations now sitting in classrooms will have a role in protecting it.

The trip began with an invitation from Frannie Minton, who had seen Winship portray Benjamin Franklin at a DAR meeting. His presentation explored Franklin's life as a printer, patriot and statesman.

Minton wanted Buchanan County to meet him, too.

"And I said yes," Winship recalled. "You know how if Franny asks you something, you say yes?"

What started as an invitation to address the local DAR chapter grew into an opportunity to become its Constitution Week school program. Constitution Week runs from Sept. 17 through Sept. 23, throughout the United States.

On Tuesday morning, Winship visited Twin Valley Elementary/Middle School, then traveled to Council Elementary/Middle School later that day. Council's Head Start children also had an opportunity to visit with him.

Thursday brought presentations at Riverview Elementary/Middle School in the morning and Tommy P. Justus Elementary/Middle School in Hurley that afternoon.

Most of his audiences were students in grades three through seven. For a man who spent his career in public education, speaking with them was familiar and enjoyable work.

Winship discussed the Constitutional Convention, ratification by the states and the amendment process. He explained that the founders included a way to change the Constitution because they understood the country and its needs would change over time.

His lessons also touched on slavery, the rights of men and women and the Second Amendment.

Behind the Washington portrayal is a lifelong interest in history, although Winship is careful about how he describes himself.

"I'm a history buff. I'm not a historian," he said.

Born in Bristol, Tennessee, he grew up around King College, where his father taught English and his mother handled



Frannie Minton (left) and David Winship (right), portraying George Washington, sit onstage at Twin Valley Elementary/Middle School during a Constitution Week program organized by the Levisa River Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

public relations. He left Bristol in the 1960s for school and travel before returning to the region in the 1980s.

His career took him into Washington County, Virginia, schools as a librarian and a facilitator for the elementary gifted program. He retired about 15 years ago, but teaching remains a central part of his life.

For about a decade, Winship has portrayed Washington during a February celebration in Washington County. An essay contest sponsored by retired teacher Dr. John Lantz encourages fourth graders to find something interesting about Washington beyond what appears in their textbooks.

Winship has also portrayed Franklin, once appeared as Thomas Jefferson and taken on the roles of colonial tradesmen during educational programs.

Those portrayals allow him to connect his interests in history, education and printing.

At King University, he continues working in a letterpress shop his father started. He also takes printing lessons beyond the shop,

explaining the process at events where students learn about colonial life.

During a recent program about the beginning of the Kings Mountain march, Winship used previously printed broadsides to demonstrate how letterpress printing worked. Students could take the sheets home, carrying a piece of the lesson with them.

"It's something that I thoroughly enjoy," he said.

His creative work extends to poetry and newspaper writing. Winship contributes to a Salem-based newspaper that now publishes online and has a poem in "Had I a Dove," a collection of Appalachian poets' responses to hurricane flooding in the region.

For him, writing, portraying historical figures and working with students share a family connection.

"I come from a long line of teachers and preachers," he said.

SEE A VISIT FROM WASHINGTON | 6A

GOOD OL DAYS



Buchanan County school nurse Brenda K. Cantrell screens third graders at Garden Elementary School in this photo published in the Oct. 7, 1971, edition of The Virginia Mountaineer.

Congressman Griffith: Actions Against Fraud

Republicans are on the front lines to root out waste, fraud and abuse of the federal government by large criminal conspiracies.

Accordingly, I am taking additional steps to continue the Republicans’ War on Fraud.

Earlier this year, I helped lead investigations into Medicaid fraud. Together with Chairman of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, Congressman Brett Guthrie, and the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee Chairman, Congressman John Joyce, we probed ongoing fraud in numerous State Medicaid programs.

Our Committee investigations extended to fraud-ridden States such as California, Minnesota and New York.

As a result of our investigative work, which shows nationwide trends in Medicare and Medicaid fraud costing American taxpayers billions of dollars every year, we produced a comprehensive staff report to shed light on our findings.

The report makes several recommendations.

One is to strengthen federal program integrity guidelines.

Minimum qualifications, screening risk standards for providers of equipment and services, and more frequent screenings as well as background checks for providers are fraud-preventative actions that federal authorities can push.

Another recommendation is to improve States’ capacity to prevent fraud before it occurs.

It is clear that some States make patients more vulnerable to fraud due to weak oversight measures. If this lack of oversight action is maintained at its current trajectory, this problem will continue to persist and grow, allowing fraudsters access to valuable health care dollars and thus robbing resources from patients that need them.

For example, some States like Virginia exercise provider screening and investigative audits. These program integrity tools and practices must be fully applied in more States.

That is why our report also encourages the employment of innovative tools to improve fraud detection capabilities.



WEEKLY REPORT
FROM THE CAPITOL

Artificial intelligence technologies can complement the above oversight actions to help States better track unusual and fraudulent activity.

As a solution to the highlighted problems, the Committee recently unveiled a package of policies that help combat fraudulent activities, protect public health programs and serve vital health care resources to patients.

As part of this policy package, I introduced H.R. 10621 – the Medicaid Fraud Fighting and Taxpayer Protection Act.

My bill targets Medicaid fraud by incentivizing States to take steps, such as implementing program integrity tools, that investigate fraud and protect federal health care programs.

The incentive provided by my bill allows States to receive an increased portion of the federal dollars saved when they identify fraud. This saved money can then be used to support numerous State programs like those in Virginia.

Ongoing fraudulent activities recently impacted Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits in Virginia.

In Lynchburg, officials notified residents that more than \$60,000 in SNAP benefits were stolen from Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards in the month of August!

It is believed that fraudsters stole private EBT card information and used the money loaded onto the cards to make purchases.

Cardinal News reported that this crime represented a 21-fold increase in food aid fraud.

Even worse, no system was in place to provide the Lynchburg SNAP theft victims with reimbursement of their stolen benefits.

Thus, the victims found themselves squeezed into a desperate situation.

Already faced with challenging health and financial conditions, SNAP recipients who lose access to all or a portion of their benefits will struggle to get by.

That is why I am promoting a measure that cracks down on fraud impacting SNAP benefits and supports victims of SNAP theft.

I am a co-sponsor of H.R. 3887 – the SNAP Anti-Theft and Victim Compensation Act.

This anti-fraud bill creates new civil penalties for any person who knowingly accesses, uses or transfers SNAP benefits.

Additionally, the bill provides that States can use SNAP benefits to reimburse households whose benefits are stolen due to no fault of their own.

These are some policies that can complement the ongoing work of federal efforts that are saving taxpayers billions and bringing bad guys to justice.

Whether you are a recipient of Medicare, Medicaid, SNAP or some other federal public health program, the benefits belong to you, not some criminal actor who is often part of international criminal conspiracies.

I am proud to continue my efforts that target fraud, protect valuable resources for patients and provide leadership for our War on Fraud.

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.

Savvy Senior: When Home Care Isn’t Enough

Dear Savvy Senior,

My mother has several chronic health conditions and needs a home caregiver to help with daily activities. I know she wants to stay at home as long as possible, but how do I know when it’s time to consider an assisted living facility or nursing home?

--Exhausted Daughter

Dear Exhausted,

Most older adults hope to remain in their own home as long as possible, and with the right support many can. But there may come a point when home care is no longer enough to meet a person’s medical, safety or social needs. While moving to an assisted living facility or nursing home is never easy, recognizing the warning signs early can help you avoid a crisis and make the transition less stressful.

If you answer “yes” to several of the following questions, it may be time to start exploring other care options.

Is home care becoming too expensive?

Eight to 10 hours of care a day, seven days a week, can easily cost \$100,000 a year or more. That’s well above the median annual cost of a one-bedroom assisted living apartment (about \$70,000), though still less than a private room in a nursing home (about \$128,000), according to Genworth’s Cost of Care Survey.

Does she need more medical care?

If your mother needs ongoing nursing care or frequent medical monitoring, a nursing home may be the better choice. If she mainly needs help with daily activities, assisted living may be enough.

Is she falling, forgetting medications or going to the hospital more often?

Frequent falls, medication mistakes and repeated hospitalizations are often signs that living at home is becoming unsafe.

Does she have dementia?

Wandering, confusion or unsafe behaviors can make home care increasingly difficult. Memory care communities provide a secure environment and specially trained staff.

Does it take two people to help her?

If she needs two people to assist with transfers,



SAVVY SENIOR

bathing or toileting, both the cost and safety risks of home care rise significantly.

Is her home still safe?

Stairs, narrow bathrooms and the lack of features like grab bars or a walk-in shower can increase the risk of falls. Home modifications may help, but they aren’t always enough.

Is she isolated or neglecting personal care?

Loneliness, poor nutrition, weight loss, or neglecting bathing and grooming can all signal that she needs more support than can realistically be provided at home.

Is caregiving overwhelming?

If you’re constantly worried, sleep-deprived or neglecting your own health, it may be time to consider a higher level of care. Planning ahead gives your family more choices and helps avoid making an important decision during a medical emergency.

Keep in mind that Medicare generally doesn’t pay for long term stays in assisted living or nursing homes. It only covers limited skilled nursing care after a qualifying hospital stay. Understanding what Medicare covers and what it doesn’t can help you avoid costly surprises.

If you’re unsure what level of care your mother needs, an Aging Life Care professional (aginglifecare.org) can assess her situation and recommend appropriate options. An initial assessment can cost \$300 to \$800 or more. You can also use a senior care advising service like A Place for Mom (aplaceformom.com), which provides free guidance because it is compensated by participating care communities.

To research facilities, visit Caring.com. For Medicare-certified nursing homes, use Medicare’s Care Compare tool at Medicare.gov/care-compare. You can also contact your local long-term care ombudsman (ltombudsman.org) to learn about complaints or quality concerns involving facilities you’re considering.

The best time to choose a care community is before a crisis forces the decision, giving your mother more choices and your family greater peace of mind.

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



By DEBBIE FOSTER

Hello Readers

I didn’t get to church this morning. Brother Kenny Coleman brought the message: God has a plan for you and me. He read Jeremiah 29:11-13, Proverbs 16:9, and John 14:6. Have faith in him and trust that we will fulfill what he has in mind for us.

Brother Kenny testified about what God has done and continues to do for him. Brother Dennis came back to church after five months in the hospital! They’re both miracles!

Tuesday afternoon, I went to the Humane Society and worked putting out items for the next yard sale.

The yard sale is scheduled for Saturday, October 10th, from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. at our offices behind Grundy High School.

Thursday afternoon, I went back to the Humane Society and worked more on the yard sale coming up. I picked Amelia up from band practice, and she stayed the night with me.

Our little Chihuahua, Minnie, has been so sick and was getting more fragile by the day. She stopped eating 3 days ago but was still drinking water. I was up all night with her, just holding her and talking to her, and at 5:30 Friday morning she quietly went to sleep. My grandson had already dug the grave; I put her in Ray’s garden, and I covered her up. Ray loved that little dog, and she loved her Daddy.

I’ve had a couple of blessings and praise reports this week. Keep praying for me, please.

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
I am OK, I am Blessed...

YOUR HOMETOWN NEWS IS JUST A CLICK AWAY



LOCAL NEWS



SPORTS



OBITUARIES



COMMUNITY EVENTS

www.VirginiaMountaineer.com

THE VIRGINIA MOUNTAINEER

The Virginia Mountaineer (USPS NO. 660-760) is published every Thursday by Virginia Media, LLC., 1633 W Main St, Salem, VA 24153. Entering in the Grundy Post Office as periodicals May 11, 1922, under Act of March 2, 1879. Periodicals postage paid at Grundy, VA 24614. Postmaster Send address changes to The Virginia Mountaineer.

OPINIONS

The views expressed in our opinion section represent the views of the writer and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Virginia Mountaineer or Virginia Media, LLC. Anyone wishing to respond to a column or editorial may contact us at (540) 389-9355.

STAFF

MICHAEL SHOWELL: President, Virginia Media, LLC
AILA BOYD: Executive Editor, Virginia Media, LLC
WENDI CRAIG: Advertising
CHAD COOPER: Editor
ANOTHY STEVENS: Sports Reporter

CONTACT

THE VIRGINIA MOUNTAINEER
Telephone: (540) 389-9355
Member
Virginia Press Association
National Newspaper Association
Advertising rates on request



Determining Your Motivation

Life becomes more difficult if we give up. Impossible may be a better way to describe quitting. Once we quit then how can we expect to go forward or be successful? We can't because the runner wins by staying in the race. Only one person wins the race but many finish the race. The race is tiring and grueling but there is a good feeling associated by completing the journey.

There are many obstacles that we face in life. Discouragement is a major one. There are lots of discouragers in life. Bad health can be very difficult and painful to overcome. Sometimes we are fortunate and we can come back to health. Sometimes bad health beats us down until we can't go on.

Pain, disabilities are progressive disease become a battle that takes everything we have to stay in the race and continue the journey. We should never be sofa coaches when commenting on other persons health struggles. None of us until we personally have our own battle.

Yet, we all must do all we can with all the medical means available to win over the challenges that come with health challenges. We all will face them if we live very long.

Another discourager may be the people with whom you associate. Do they make you better or diminish you? Do they see the good in you? Do they build you up? Do they affirm your efforts, work and life? If your only good vibes come from strangers then maybe you need to find some different friends.

A true friend will tell you the truth but will not hesitate to applaud your talents, attainments and achievements. This helps immensely with your life's race. This is one of the reasons we have cheerleaders at ballgames. The players on the field are encouraged by cheering fans. We all need some of that for our daily lives. Be willing to give some of that to others. You need it yourself and thank those who cheer for you along the way of life.

Stay creative. Don't give up your creativity. Discouragement often robs us of creative energy. We begin to feel useless, helpless and overwhelmed. We begin to feel life is impossible. We have all had bleak moments. Relationships disappoint us.

Careers or business ventures go south. There are always a few failures to throw into the mix of life. We become drained, exhausted and can't see beyond our situation. This is when we have to stir up our creativity. The first place to start may be going to bed and getting some sleep, but stay there. Get rest and refocus.

Utilize your known resources. This may be your family, friends, church, your faith, your talents, whatever resources you have. If you feel you do not have any resources then ask for help.

Pray, talk to a counselor, a minister, a real friend, but someone who can help you to evaluate your life and determine real motivators for pushing forward.



Adult education connection

Digital technology has become an important part of everyday life. Adults use computers, smartphones, and the internet to communicate, work, learn, manage finances, access services, and stay connected with their communities. As technology continues to change, understanding how to use digital tools responsibly and safely has become an essential part of adult education. Digital citizenship teaches adults how to participate in the digital world in ways that are safe, respectful, informed, and responsible.

One important part of navigating the digital world is maintaining online safety. Adult learners need to understand how to create strong passwords, protect personal information, recognize scams, and identify suspicious emails or websites. These skills can help adults avoid identity theft, fraud, and other online risks. Learning how to protect personal information is especially important as more everyday activities move online.

Digital citizenship is also closely connected to employment and career development. Many workplaces require employees to use email, online training platforms, digital forms, video conferencing, and other technology. Adults who develop strong digital skills may feel more confident when applying for jobs, completing workplace tasks, and learning new technologies.

For adult learners, heightened online awareness can increase confidence and independence. Some adults may feel overwhelmed when using unfamiliar technology. Supportive instruction and opportunities to practice can help learners become more comfortable navigating digital environments. As their skills improve, they may become more willing to use technology for education, employment, communication, and personal goals.

Adult education programs play an important role in helping learners become responsible digital citizens. Digital citizenship can be incorporated into computer classes, GED preparation, workforce training, and other adult education courses. If you are interested in furthering your understanding of digital technology, please call Southwest Regional Adult Education at 276-889-5424.

The Watchman: Will you throw your hat in the ring?

My understanding is that this phrase originated in boxing, and in the early 1900s, 99% of men, rich or poor, actually wore hats.

If a new guy wanted to challenge the local champ, he would literally throw his own hat into the ring as a sign of his challenge.

Today we are facing some of the biggest challenges I have known in my lifetime, maybe the greatest in our constitutional republic. What's at stake, you might ask, is our future, for our children and our grandchildren. The freedom we have had in our lifetime is at stake.

This week, I have been thinking about what Ronald Reagan said. He said that freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. My thoughts on this are that this is going to happen on our watch.

Are we going to let freedom slip out of our hands, or are we going to throw our hats in the ring and fight for what God has given us, or are we going to let the enemy steal our God-given rights that so many died for?

If they have their way, our constitution, as we know it, will change. They want to make radical changes that will alter the course our nation has been on since its inception.

Our nation was founded on God and his word, God's principles and God's morals. An enemy stands behind this, and his name is Lucifer.

Isaiah 14:12 says, "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning; how art thou cut down to the ground, which did weaken the nations?"

John 10:10 calls him the thief, saying he comes to steal, kill, and destroy. But I like the last part of this verse. Jesus said, "I am come that you might have life, and have life more abundantly."

So, you see what the enemy is trying to do to our nation. This is not God's will.

So, we have identified the enemy. You say our enemy is not flesh but spiritual. The Bible says in Ephesians 6:12 that we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

So, now we know what we are fighting against, the rulers of darkness. Now, how do we fight?

Let's look at 2 Corinthians, chapter 10:3-5. Verse three says, "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh."

Verse four says, "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds."

Verse five says, "Casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

That's what we are facing now: the things that are against the knowledge of God. For example, they say God is non-binary, that God is neither male nor female.

But look what Jesus said in Matthew 6:9: "In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be thy name. God is male, our Father, so now we know how to fight God.



THE WATCHMAN:

Chronicles 20:15: "Thus saith the Lord unto you, be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's."

God is looking for those who will stand for him and fight. Jude 1:3 says it was needful for me to write to you and exhort you to earnestly contend for the faith that was delivered to the Saints.

Faith is under attack. Communism, socialism, and Marxism don't believe in the God of the Bible; they believe in the power of government.

On July 13, 2024, Donald Trump, then former president of the United States, in Butler, Pennsylvania, survived an assassination attempt while speaking at an open-air campaign rally at Butler Farm.

He was wounded in his upper right ear and taken to the ground by the Secret Service. He got up, blood running down his face, fist in the air, saying Fight, fight, fight.

Recently, at the United Nations General Assembly, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu gave a speech. He said We're going to win. We have no other choice.

That's the way I feel about America. We have no other choice but to fight for the faith passed down from other generations to us, to fight for our children and our grandchildren.

We must stand united. This is a spiritual battle. We win it through prayer and fasting. Standing on the word of God, proclaiming God's word, united we stand, divided we fall.

Are you willing to throw your hat in the ring? Get connected with your church of choice in your community, get engaged, be a participant, not a spectator, and God will be with you. God's looking for you.

2 Chronicles 16:9 For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him.

2 Chronicles 7:14 If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sins, and I will heal their land.

Remember what the enemy is saying. He means it. Destroy first the big Satan, America, and then the little Satan, Israel.

Get out and cast your vote on November 3, 2026, or vote early. If you believe what I have said in this article and are on God's side, vote for what God's word stands for.

Stay tuned, the watchmen

VDOT announces traffic alerts for Buchanan County

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

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

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

The following are current VDOT projects in Buchanan, Dickenson and Tazewell Counties that may cause traffic delays from October 5 through October 11, 2026.

Buchanan County
Route 460/121 Poplar Creek Phase B

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

Dickenson County
Route 83 roundabout at Route 637

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

Russell County
Route 19 safety improvements

Safety improvements are underway on Route 19 northbound in the Rosedale area of Russell County. Lane closures are in place beginning 0.8 miles west of Route 80. Pay close attention to signs and message boards. (Completion: November 2026)

Tazewell County
Second Street/Front Street Intersection Improvement – Richlands

Work is underway on a realignment project on 2nd Street and Front Street in the town of Richlands, modifying the raised median/island at the intersection of 2nd Street and Front Street and adding a raised median along Front Street to allow right-turn movements from Kents Ridge Road. Pay attention to signs, message boards, and construction crews in the area. (Completion: November 2026)

Route 19/460 and Route 610 intersection improvements Claypool Hill

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

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

Interstate 81 – Exit 50 and mile marker 52 bridge rehabilitations (Smyth County)

A project that includes bridge rehabilitation work on

six bridges north and southbound at Exit 50 and mile marker 52 in Smyth County is underway. Be alert to construction crews in the area. Nighttime lane closures will be in place for the duration of the project. Also, be alert to flaggers and/or lane closures on Kiawana Road and Nick's Creek Road. Pay attention to signs and message boards. (Completion: November 2027)

Interstate 81 – Exit 45 deceleration lane extension (Smyth County)

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

Interstate 81 – Bridge rehabilitation at mile marker 68 (Wythe County)

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

Interstate 81/77 interchange (Wytheville)

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

Interstate 77/Exit 41 area (Wytheville)

Be alert to construction activities at the I-77 interchange at Exit 41, which includes improvements to the northbound lanes and northbound I-77 off-ramp, Nye Road, and Peppers Ferry Road. Be alert to traffic shifts. Pay close attention to construction vehicles, work zone signs, and workers in the area. (Late 2026)

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

Interstate 81

Nighttime bridge deck repairs northbound near Exit 35 and mile marker 37 in Smyth County.

Nighttime paving operations southbound between mile marker 21 and Exit 19 in Washington County.

Nighttime bridge repairs north and southbound between mile markers 67 and 69 in Wythe County.

Nighttime bridge repairs northbound near mile marker 58 in Wythe County.

Nighttime traffic engineering work southbound between mile markers 79 and 76 in Wythe County.

A super load will be traveling northbound from Bristol to the West Virginia state line the week of October 5.

Interstate 77

Nighttime bridge inspection work northbound between Exit 64 and mile marker 65 in Bland County.

Nighttime bridge deck repairs north and southbound between mile markers 43 and 46 in Wythe County. A slow roll will take place between 12 a.m. and 5 a.m. on October 7.

SPOTLIGHT ON THE CAM

The Clampetts Are Coming to The CAM

By **JODI REYNOLDS**
Theatre Guild of Buchanan County

Well, doggies! The Clampetts are packing up and heading to Beverly Hills, and they're making a stop right here in Buchanan County!

The Theatre Guild of Buchanan County is preparing to bring one of television's most beloved families to life when The Beverly Hillbillies takes the stage at The CAM October 15–18. With a talented cast of familiar faces and newcomers, plenty of laughs, and a very special opening-night celebration, this is one production you won't want to miss.

For generations, audiences have loved the story of Jed Clampett, a humble mountain man who strikes oil and suddenly finds himself a millionaire. With his new-found fortune, Jed packs up Granny, Elly May, and Jethro and moves the family to a mansion in Beverly Hills. Of course, money may buy a fancy house, but it certainly doesn't change the Clampetts! Their down-home ways and encounters with high society create one hilarious situation after another.

Bringing this iconic family to life on The CAM's stage is a cast that has already generated tremendous excitement on social media.

Wade Vance will take on the role of Jed Clampett, the levelheaded patriarch who somehow manages to keep his eccentric family together. Joining him are Penny Nimmo as the feisty and opinionated Granny, Andrea Lee as the sweet and spirited Elly May, and Dennis Dales as Jethro Bodine, whose grand ambitions and questionable judgment are sure to keep audiences laughing.

And what would the Clampetts be without their Beverly Hills neighbors? Noah Barton will portray Mr. Drysdale, the banker determined to keep Jed's millions in his bank, while Jennifer Hyatt takes on the role of Mrs. Drysdale. Nicole Shrader rounds out the familiar Beverly Hills characters as the ever-efficient Miss Hathaway.

Our talented supporting cast includes Jacob Hess as Brewster/Colonel Foxhall, Shawn Justice as George

Turner/Frank Richards, Bee Hughes as Percy Pennyweather, Joanie Griffith as Mrs. Pennyweather/Cousin Pearl, Sophie Bales as Gloria Mundy, Kurtlyn Thomas as Emaline Fetty, Gabby Casterline as Frederika Collins, Aliyah Armendariz as Groovy Monahan, Shenna Viers as Mr. Oglethorpe, and Sherry Keen as Mrs. Stoke-ly-Smythe.

With a cast this large and a story filled with colorful characters, audiences can expect an evening of comedy, confusion, and good old-fashioned entertainment.

Opening night is October 15th, and we're turning the evening into a special ticketed event featuring dinner, pre-show entertainment, and, of course, The Beverly Hillbillies.

This is an opportunity to make a whole evening of your visit to The CAM. Come enjoy a meal, settle in for some entertainment, and then watch as the Clampetts trade their mountain home for a Beverly Hills mansion.

For those who prefer our traditional theatre experience, regular performances will continue Friday through Sunday, October 16–18.

If the response to our recent cast announcements is any indication, the Clampetts are going to have quite a welcoming committee when they arrive in Buchanan County.

Our cast spotlight posts have generated an incredible amount of interest, and we fully anticipate that some performances will sell out. We encourage everyone planning to attend to purchase tickets early, particularly those interested in our special opening-night event.

Whether you grew up watching Jed, Granny, Jethro, and Elly May on television or you're being introduced to this unforgettable family for the first time, The Beverly Hillbillies promises an entertaining trip down memory lane, with plenty of laughs along the way.

Gather your family, invite your friends, and join us at The CAM for a little mountain hospitality, Beverly Hills style. We can't promise you'll strike oil, but we can promise you'll leave with a smile.

Purchase your tickets on our website at www.seeyouatthecam.com and follow our journey on our social media channels. See you at The CAM.



Crowns await the winners of the 2026 Miss Black Diamond Pageant, rescheduled for Dec. 5 at Southern Gap High School. The Buchanan County Chamber of Commerce fundraiser offers 13 age divisions and a \$500 college scholarship for the Miss division winner.

Miss Black Diamond Pageant moved to Dec. 5 at Southern Gap

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

The Miss Black Diamond Pageant has been postponed until Dec. 5, giving prospective contestants more time to enter the Buchanan County Chamber of Commerce fundraiser.

Originally scheduled for Oct. 10 at Twin Valley Elementary/Middle School, the pageant was postponed because it did not receive enough entries. It will now take place at the new Southern Gap High School.

A \$500 college scholarship will be awarded to the winner of the Miss Black Diamond division, which is open to contestants ages 18-22.

The pageant offers 13 age divisions, with opportunities for contestants ranging from infants to women 40 and older. It is being directed by Mary Rachel McGeorge-Young.

Divisions include Wee Miss, birth through 11 months; Baby Miss, 12-23 months; Mini Miss, 24-35 months; Toddler Miss, ages 3-4; Tiny Miss, ages 5-6; Little Miss, ages 7-8; Petite Miss, ages 9-10; Pre-Teen Miss, ages 11-12; Jr. Teen Miss, ages 13-14; Teen Miss, ages 15-17; Miss, ages 18-22; Ms., ages 23-39; and Elegant Ms., ages 40 and older. Each division's title includes Black Diamond.

The chamber is encouraging contestants to submit applications and asking families and community members to help spread the word about the new date and location.

Applications for the 2026 Miss Black Diamond Pageant are available at <https://pci.jotform.com/form/262376833520155>.

Griffith's traveling staff to visit Grundy Oct. 13

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

Buchanan County residents will have an opportunity to meet with staff from U.S. Rep. Morgan Griffith's office Tuesday, Oct. 13, in Grundy.

Griffith's Ninth District traveling staff will hold office hours from 1:30 to 3 p.m. at the Town of Grundy offices, 1185 Plaza Drive.

The stop gives local residents a chance to bring questions and concerns directly to members of the congressman's staff close to home. The visit is part of the office's October schedule of traveling staff hours throughout the district.

The scheduled appearance is by Griffith's staff.

For more information, call Griffith's Abingdon office at 276-525-1405 or his Christiansburg office at 540-381-5671.

Pizza made perfect right at home

Pizza is among the most popular foods in many areas across the globe. Indeed, few people have likely had a slice of pizza and not wanted to have another at some in the near or distant future.

Versatility of ingredients has undoubtedly contributed to the popularity of pizza. People can now enjoy pizza with a wide range of toppings. Homemade pizza has also become a staple in many households, and this Lines+Angles recipe for "Pizza With Peppers, Tomatoes, Onions, and Prosciutto" features an array of tasty toppings.

Pizza With Peppers, Tomatoes, Onions, and Prosciutto Makes 4 servings

For the crust:

- 1/2 teaspoon Instant Or Active Dry Yeast
- 3/4 cups warm water
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 5 tablespoons good-quality olive oil, plus extra for the bowl and as needed

For the pizza toppings:

- 2 tablespoons good-quality olive oil
- 2 red bell peppers, rinsed, seeded, and cut into thin strips
- 2 1/2 cups cherry tomatoes, rinsed, trimmed, and halved
- 1 red onion, peeled and sliced into wedges
- Parmesan cheese, grated
- 1 1/3 cups fresh mozzarella cheese, thinly sliced or crumbled
- 12 slices Prosciutto, thinly sliced
- Fresh basil, rinsed and chopped, to taste
- 3 sprigs fresh oregano, rinsed and leaves chopped
- Salt, to taste
- Freshly cracked black pepper, to taste



For the crust:

1. Sprinkle yeast over warm water. Let stand for 5 minutes.
2. In the bowl of a standing mixer, combine flour and salt. With the mixer running on low speed (with paddle attachment), drizzle in olive oil until incorporated with flour. Pour in yeast mixture and mix until the dough comes together in a sticky ball.
3. Coat a separate mixing bowl lightly with olive oil. Form the dough into a smooth ball, place the dough in the bowl and toss to coat dough in olive oil. Cover the bowl tightly with plastic wrap and set aside to rise for at least 1 to 2 hours.
4. Preheat oven to 450 F. Lightly oil a pizza pan.
5. Knead the dough for several minutes and reshape into a ball. Roll out the dough with a rolling pin or stretch it out, until very thin. Carefully transfer the dough to the prepared pizza pan. Drizzle a little olive oil over the dough and spread it to the edges. Season the crust lightly with salt.

For the pizza toppings:

1. Prepare the vegetables. Sprinkle the prepared dough with Parmesan cheese. Arrange half of the mozzarella evenly over the top of the crust. Arrange the peppers, cherry tomatoes, onions, and prosciutto over the top of the mozzarella. Sprinkle with the remaining mozzarella, basil, and oregano. Season to taste with salt and pepper.
2. Bake for 15 to 17 minutes in the lower half of the oven, until the crust is golden brown and toppings are bubbly. Remove from oven and cut into slices and serve immediately.



Doods before dudes

This stud muffin is a two-year-old male Doodle. His wavy coat is colored sweet honey gold. He has round, dark eyes, a cute black nose and weighs about twenty-five pounds. His personality is a little nervous and quiet. He is not enjoying his time at the shelter.

This hunky hound will be available for adoption at the Buchanan County Animal Shelter until Monday, October 12, 2026.

Also available for adoption is this seven-week-old male Shepherd mix. His short coat is colored gold and white. He has kind eyes and an awesome spotted nose. He shares his kennel at the shelter with three sisters and three brothers, all equally adorable. 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.

A VISIT FROM WASHINGTON

FROM PAGE 3A

The Buchanan County visit also gave Winship time to become a student himself.

Between presentations, Frannie and Rayburn Minton took him on a tour of what they described as the county's four corners. He recalled visiting the Breaks years earlier, but had never spent much time traveling around Buchanan County.

The tour changed that.

"I was just taken by Buchanan County," Winship said.

He did not visit Southern Gap High School or Appalachian School of Law during the trip, but said he would like to see both on a future visit. As a retired educator, he was particularly interested in the new high school.

"I really look forward to seeing a nice modern school," he said.

Winship thanked the Mintons for introducing him to the county and helping make the school visits possible. He left with memories of the children he met and an appreciation for the place they call home.

"I just thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity not only to speak with the students about the Constitution, but also to be in Buchanan County and experience Buchanan County," he said.

"And in all honesty, I look forward to coming back."

YOUR HOMETOWN NEWS IS JUST A CLICK AWAY



LOCAL NEWS



SPORTS



OBITUARIES



COMMUNITY EVENTS

www.VirginiaMountaineer.com

Eagles sweep Graham in
big district home win

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

Southern Gap survived a tight opening set, then took control to sweep Graham in a Southwest District volleyball matchup Thursday, Oct. 1, at Southern Gap High School.

The Eagles pulled out a hard-fought 29-27 victory in the first set before winning the next two, 25-17 and 25-11, to finish off a big home win.

Senior Leah Rasnake led Southern Gap's attack with 12 kills and added 10 digs and two aces. Junior Adyson Bell contributed 12 assists, six digs, four kills and an ace while leading the Eagles with 12 service points.

Senior Claire Griffey anchored the defense with 24 digs, adding two aces and an assist. Bela Hurley finished with eight assists, four aces and seven service points.

Lucy Savage and Addy Boyd each re-

SEE **EAGLES SWEEP | 2B**



Leah Rasnake recorded 12 kills, 10 digs and two aces in Southern Gap's three-set Southwest District win over Graham on Oct. 1.



Adyson Bell contributed 12 assists, six digs and four kills as Southern Gap swept Graham at home on Oct. 1.



Southern Gap freshman Carson Blankenship powers up the middle for a 1-yard touchdown Friday, Oct. 2, against Richlands at Smiley Ratliff Field. Blankenship rushed for 303 yards and five touchdowns in the Eagles' 61-21 victory (Photo by Chad Cooper).

Blankenship's five
touchdowns power
Eagles past Richlands

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

Carson Blankenship had plenty of room to run Friday night, and the Southern Gap freshman knew exactly who to thank.

Blankenship rushed for 303 yards and five touchdowns on 19 carries as the Eagles rolled past Richlands 61-21 at Smiley Ratliff Field at the Red Robertson Athletic Complex, earning the first Southwest District football victory in school history.

Southern Gap piled up 542 rushing yards, won its third straight game and improved to 4-2 overall and 1-0 in district play.

"Man, the offense was crazy. We ran it all the way down the field. You know, line was opening up holes. I could see right through them. It was great. O-line did great," Blankenship said.

The game brought together two former college teammates on opposite sidelines. Southern Gap coach Greg Tester and Richlands coach Bubba Edwards played together at the University of Virginia's College at Wise, where Edwards blocked for Tester.

On Friday, Tester's offensive line helped carry the Eagles through some early mistakes before Southern Gap pulled away.

"Like I said, hats off to the kids, man. They just played super hard," Tester said. "Offense and defense lines played great, man."

Southern Gap's defense set the tone on the opening possession. Chase Baker dropped a Richlands ball carrier for a loss on second down, and a third-down incompletion forced the Blue Tornado to punt.

The Eagles fumbled on their first offensive play, giving Richlands another opportunity. Baker again broke into the backfield for a tackle for loss, helping Southern Gap force another punt.

Blankenship then got the ground game going, breaking loose for a 35-yard touchdown with 6:26 left in the first quarter. Brayden White added the two-point conversion run for an 8-0 lead.

Southern Gap recovered the ensuing onside kick but lost another fumble. Richlands capitalized when quarterback Jamie Capshaw connected with Landon Absher for a 57-yard touchdown. The extra point pulled the Blue Tornado within 8-7.

An interception ended another Southern Gap possession, but the Eagles' defense answered as defensive end Luke Stiltner and linebacker Gunner Baker chased down Capshaw in the end zone for a safety to make it a 10-7 game.

Blankenship followed with a 31-yard touchdown run, pushing Southern Gap's lead to 16-7 with 48 seconds remaining in the opening

SEE **BLANKENSHIP'S FIVE | 3B**

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

IN THE LOCKER ROOM
Eagles in the hunt
as playoff picture
takes shape



IN THE LOCKER ROOM

October football has arrived, and Greg Tester and the Southern Gap Eagles have plenty for Buchanan County to talk about.

The Eagles defeated Richlands 61-21 last Friday night at home, boosting their record to 4-2 overall and starting Southwest District play with a win. This victory ended a 20-year drought for Buchanan County teams against the Blue Tornado.

After six games in their inaugural season, Southern Gap ranks fifth in the Region 2D power standings. Their next matchup is on the road at Tazewell, just before the Eagles' second bye week. That's one benefit of playing in Week 0. The Southern Gap will host River View W.V. for homecoming, followed by back-to-back road trips to Eastside and Wise Central to finish out the inaugural regular season.

That is a pretty good place to be. It also leaves the Eagles with something to chase.

As we look at the playoff picture heading into Week 8, Southern Gap has a power rating of 17.33. Graham leads Region 2D at 22.00, followed by Ridgeview at 20.40, Gate City at 19.67 and Union at 19.33.

The Eagles are right behind that group, with Virginia High, Tazewell and Lebanon filling out the current top eight.

The top eight teams qualify for the regional playoffs, with the top four hosting a first-round game, so Southern Gap is on the right side of the line today. But there is a lot of football between being fifth in early October and earning a postseason spot in November.

Nobody needs to start making travel plans just yet.

Still, I like where the Eagles are sitting. They have won three straight, and the offense has put up 63 points against Giles, 46 against Honaker and now 61 against Richlands. That is 170 points over three games.

Whatever else you take from those scores, Southern Gap is finding ways to get into the end zone.

The next challenge is carrying that momentum into Tazewell on Oct. 9. The Bulldogs are seventh in the regional rankings at 16.60 and improved to 3-2 with an 11-0 shutout of Virginia High.

That result should get the Eagles' attention. Tazewell

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

Wallin wins; Akard keeps Kiwanis/
TruPoint 5K tradition alive

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

A Wise Central senior set the pace. A 78-year-old runner kept a cherished tradition going.

Nathan Wallin finished first in 16 minutes, 39 seconds, while Curtis Akard completed his 19th appearance in the event as 51 runners competed in the 26th annual Kiwanis/TruPoint Bank 5K on Saturday, Sept. 26, at Breaks Interstate Park.

The morning began with a chill as runners gathered near Shelter 3 by the pool area for the 10 a.m. start. Temperatures climbed as the day went on, but the park's scenic surroundings came with a challenge: a demanding course that made competitors earn their finish.

"It's a hard course. A very, very hard course," said co-race organizer Jon Rife of Rife's Furniture. Rife, together with Rickey Owens and Amanda Matney, coordinated the event.

Wallin, a senior at Wise Central, handled that challenge better than anyone and won the overall male title. Asked how it felt to win, he offered a brief answer.

"Pretty good," Wallin said.

The cool weather did little to slow him.

"Nah, I felt good," he said when asked whether the cold bothered him.

For Akard, the oldest competitor, Saturday's race was another chapter in a running career that began in 1978.

The Blountville, Tennessee, constable won the male grandmaster division in 36 minutes, 32 seconds. More remarkable than his finishing time was the number of races that brought him to that moment.

"In fact, this is my 1,071st road race in my career," Akard said.

His racing history includes five marathons in the 1980s, including the Marine Corps Marathon in Washington and races in Knoxville, Tennessee, and Huntsville, Alabama.

Akard had planned to run elsewhere before learning when this year's Breaks race would be held. He changed his plans to return to the park.

"I said, I can't miss my 19th year at the Breaks," he said.

Fletcher captured the overall female title in 21:09. Billy Mullins won the male masters division in 22:48, and Jessica Horn took the female masters title in 31:22.

Wise Central brought full boys and girls teams for the cross country team competition and received \$150 for each team. Southern Gap had boys and girls participating, while Mountain Mission School fielded male runners.

Southern Gap sophomore Bentley Jackson, Wyatt Street and Kyler Lester finished just seconds apart. Jackson completed the course in 18:59, Street followed in 19:05, and Lester finished in 19:14.

SEE **WALLIN WINS | 2B**

New People's Bank

PLAYER OF THE WEEK

SOUTHERN GAP EAGLES

CARSON BLANKENSHIP

Southern Gap High School freshman Carson Blankenship is the New People's Bank Player of the Week.

Blankenship rushed for 303 yards on 19 carries with five touchdowns in a 61-21 win over Richlands last Friday night at Southern Gap.

New Peoples Bank
www.NewPeoples.Bank

CONGRATULATIONS!

Member FDIC

School Board approves health insurance renewal with 10% rate increase

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

The Buchanan County School Board unanimously approved an employee health insurance renewal on Sept. 15 that continues coverage for another year with a 10% increase in premium rates.

Knox school board member Tommy Blankenship moved to approve the agreement, and Garden school board member Ray Blankenship seconded it.

The renewal covers Oct. 1, 2026, through Sept. 30, 2027, and continues the school system's participation in the Buchanan County consolidated insurance group. Other participants include the Board of Supervisors, Public Service Authority and Department of Social Services.

Coverage will continue through Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield under the Customized PPO KeyCare 300 plan. Innovative Insurance negotiated the renewal, according to the resolution.

For the school system, the agreement lists approximately \$7.57 million in annual health insurance funding, payable in 12 installments. The amount is based on insurance enrollment as of July 1 and will be adjusted as employees enter or leave coverage.

Monthly premium rates are \$1,009.37 for employee-only coverage, \$1,514.03 for employee-and-child coverage, \$2,270.71 for employee-and-spouse coverage and \$2,937.25 for family coverage.

These are the total coverage rates listed in the agreement. The resolution does not identify the portion employees will pay

through payroll deductions.

The consolidated group will continue operating a partially self-insured plan, with participating agencies assuming some of the financial risk for medical claims. Monthly payments go into a fund used to cover claims and administrative expenses.

The 10% increase follows another 10% increase for the previous plan year and a 5% increase for the year before that, according to the resolution.

The agreement also continues optional dental insurance through Delta Dental for school employees and provides for air medical flight insurance through AirMedCare.

The resolution authorizes the School Board chairman, superintendent and clerk to execute the agreement on behalf of the school system.

Virginia Mountaineer Week 7 Football Scoreboard

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

Southwest Virginia
Abingdon 49, Johnson County, TN 6
Advertisement
Bluefield 63, George Wythe 6
Chilhowie 46, Honaker 12
Eastside 33, J.I. Burton 0
Gate City 21, Union 15
Graham 56, Marion 7
Holston 55, Fort Chiswell 14
Lebanon 41, John Battle 11
Northwood 42, Castlewood 13
Patrick Henry 55, Rural Retreat 22
Rye Cove 34, Lee High 20
Southern Gap 61, Richlands 21
Tazewell 11, Virginia High 0

EAGLES SWEEP

FROM PAGE 1B

corded five kills. Savage also had an ace and two service points.

Senior Madison Lester contributed eight service points, two kills, an ace and a block, while Megan Hess added two kills.

After the closely contested opener, Southern Gap widened its winning margin in each set, closing the match with its strongest showing of the night.

IN THE LOCKER ROOM

FROM PAGE 1B

held sixth-ranked Virginia High scoreless, and quarterback Ty Wittaker has put up massive numbers this year. Southern Gap will have to earn what it gets on the road.

For two teams separated by just two places in the rankings, that game carries plenty of weight.

Elsewhere in Region 2D, Graham took care of business with a 56-7 victory at Marion. The G-Men are 4-1 and remain the team everybody else is chasing in the ratings.

Gate City earned one of Friday's biggest wins, beating Union 21-15. Both teams are now 4-2, but the Blue Devils hold third place ahead of the fourth-place Bears.

That is another reminder that records alone do not tell the whole playoff story. Southern Gap also has four wins and two losses, yet sits behind both.

Virginia High's loss at Tazewell dropped the Bearcats to 4-3. Their 16.71 rating leaves them just ahead of the Bulldogs, while Lebanon holds eighth at 15.67 after beating John Battle 41-11.

If you want a race to watch beyond our Eagles, keep an eye on that final playoff position.

Wise Central is ninth at 15.60, just seven-hundredths of a point behind Lebanon. There is hardly any breathing room there. Lee is 10th at 14.00 after losing 34-20 to unbeaten Rye Cove.

Marion, John Battle and Richlands round out the Region 2D rankings at 10.20, 10.17 and 9.83, respectively.

Over in Region 1D, Rye Cove and Chilhowie are making a strong case that the road through the region could run through one of their fields.

Both are 6-0. Rye Cove holds the top spot at 20.67 after its win at Lee, with Chilhowie close behind at 20.33 following a 46-12 victory over Honaker.

We have already seen what Rye Cove can do. Southern Gap battled the Eagles in a 35-24 loss earlier this season, and Rye Cove has kept right on winning.

Patrick Henry, under head coach Austin Cooper, my nephew, is third at 19.33 and improved to 5-1 by beating Rural Retreat 55-22. The Rebels from Glade Springs are close enough to keep the two unbeaten teams looking over their shoulders.

Northwood sits fourth at 16.40 after a 42-13 victory over Castlewood, while Holston is fifth at 14.67 following a 28-6 win over Fort Chiswell.

Eastside shook off a slow start to deliver a convincing 33-0 victory over J.I. Burton. The Spartans are sixth at 13.60, with Burton seventh at 12.50.

Honaker holds the eighth spot at 12.33 despite a 1-5 record. That shows why you can't rule a team out of the playoff conversation based on wins and losses alone.

Thomas Walker is ninth at 11.40, followed by Rural Retreat at 11.17, Twin Springs at 8.50 and Castlewood at 8.00. For now, those four are outside the eight-team field.

These rankings show where everybody stands, but October has a way of moving things around. A big win, a tough loss and results elsewhere can change the conversation in a hurry.

For Southern Gap, the immediate job is clear: Keep winning and give yourself a chance to climb.

The Eagles have put themselves in the postseason conversation in their first season together. Now comes the part where every Friday feels a little bigger.

Next stop, Tazewell.

"Thanks for joining me In the Locker Room. Until next week, let's keep celebrating the victories, learning from the defeats, and always standing behind Buchanan County's athletes."

WALLIN WINS

FROM PAGE 1B



Event co-organizer Jon Rife gives instructions to middle school runners gathered at the starting line before their races Sept. 26 at Breaks Interstate Park.

Jackson and Street placed second and third in the male 15-19 division behind Ty Arney, who ran 17:43. Fionna Niece (21:50) won the female 15-19 division, followed by Rheagan Sullivan (22:24) and Veronika Silis (23:38).

Molly Taylor (25:03) won the female 14-and-under division, with Sarah Sturgill (26:05) second. Ezra Addis (22:57) and Daniel Mills placed second and third in the male 14-and-under division. Issac Hood (23:57) won the male 25-29 division, and Josh Horn (29:35) took first among men ages 40-44.

Younger competitors took their turn when the middle school races began at 10:30 a.m.

Wesley Tanudjaya won the boys' fifth and sixth grade division, followed by Easton Stevens and Evan Mullins. Abby Jude finished first in the girls division, ahead of Mary Shelton and Ahleah Daniels.

Eddie Stiltner led the boys' seventh- and eighth-grade division, with Wilson Tanudjaya second and Peyton Trammel third. Angela Lin won the girls division, followed by Emily Layne and Makailyn Hurley.

After the races, runners, coaches, volunteers and others attending enjoyed a pancake and sausage breakfast prepared by Barbara Rife and Pat Clayburne before gathering for the awards ceremony. Buchanan General Hospital supplied the breakfast ingredients.

The meal was a welcome reward after a morning on the course. When Rife asked whether everyone had enjoyed the pancake breakfast, the crowd responded with an enthusiastic "Yeah!"

Rife also asked runners to recognize the coaches and relatives whose time and encouragement help get them to the starting line.

"And I want you runners to give a round of applause for all those coaches that help you," he said.

Volunteers from Appalachian School of Law, Appalachian College of Pharmacy, Key Club and Kiwanis helped make the event possible. With runners spread across the course, Rife said their presence was especially valuable.

"This course is so stretched out that if we don't have people on the course, it's really tough," he said.

Park Superintendent Austin Bradley and Ranger Terry Owens helped prepare and mark the course.

The Kiwanis Club of Grundy recognized sponsors Food City, SunCoke Energy, Legacy Bank, Buchanan County Parks and Recreation, Buchanan General Hospital, The Virginia Mountaineer and Rife's TV.



Curtis Akard approaches the finish line during his 19th appearance at the Breaks race. The 78-year-old Blountville, Tennessee, constable was the oldest competitor and won the male grandmaster division in 36:32, completing his 1,071st career road race.



Event co-organizer Amanda Matney presents Wise Central senior Nathan Wallin with his trophy after he won the overall male title in 16:39 at the Kiwanis/TruPoint Bank 5K on Sept. 26 at Breaks Interstate Park.



Pat Clayburne and Barbara Rife prepare pancakes for the breakfast following the Kiwanis/TruPoint Bank 5K at Breaks Interstate Park. Runners, coaches and volunteers enjoyed pancakes and sausage before the awards ceremony, with breakfast supplies provided by Buchanan General Hospital.

NEWS

is just a click away!

LOCAL NEWS

SPORTS

OBITUARIES

COMMUNITY EVENTS

The VIRGINIA MOUNTAINEER

LATEST NEWS

Local Coverage. Real Stories. Real People.

The VIRGINIA MOUNTAINEER

Your Community. Your Stories. Your Newspaper.

Find us online at

WWW.VIRGINIAMOUNTAINEER.COM

VIRGINIA MOUNTAINEER PIGSKIN PROGNOSTICATORS							
THIS WEEK'S GAMES		CHAD COOPER	SAM BARTLEY	RYAN KEENE	TERESA MATNEY	MARK COOPER	BRIAN MOORE
							
1	Southern Gap at Tazewell	Southern Gap	Southern Gap	Southern Gap	Southern Gap	Southern Gap	Southern Gap
2	Union at Ridgeview	Union	Union	Ridgeview	Ridgeview	Union	Ridgeview
3	Wise Central at Richlands	Wise Central	Wise Central	Wise Central	Wise Central	Wise Central	Richlands
4	Eastside at Rye Cove	Rye Cove	Rye Cove	Rye Cove	Rye Cove	Rye Cove	Rye Cove
5	Patrick Henry at Holston	Patrick Henry	Patrick Henry	Patrick Henry	Patrick Henry	Patrick Henry	Patrick Henry
6	Mars Hill at Emory & Henry	Mars Hill	Emory & Henry	Mars Hill	Mars Hill	Emory & Henry	Emory & Henry
7	Lenoir Rhyne at UVA-Wise	Lenoir Rhyne	UVA-Wise	Lenoir Rhyne	Lenoir Rhyne	Lenoir Rhyne	Lenoir Rhyne
8	Georgia at Alabama	Georgia	Georgia	Georgia	Georgia	Georgia	Georgia
9	LSU at Kentucky	LSU	LSU	LSU	LSU	LSU	LSU
10	UCLA at Oregon	Oregon	Oregon	Oregon	Oregon	Oregon	Oregon
11	Indiana at Nebraska	Indiana	Indiana	Indiana	Indiana	Nebraska	Indiana
12	Buccaneers at Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Buccaneers	Cowboys	Buccaneers
OVERALL RECORDS		55-17	52-20	52-20	54-18	53-19	48-24



Southern Gap's Chase Baker brings down a Richlands ball carrier for a loss Friday, Oct. 2, at Smiley Ratliff Field. The Eagles held the Blue Tornado to 15 rushing yards in a 61-21 victory, earning their first Southwest District win (Photo by Chad Cooper).

BLANKENSHIP'S FIVE

FROM PAGE 1B

quarter. Richlands stayed within reach early in the second quarter. Capshaw found Absher for a 21-yard touchdown with 11:20 left in the half, cutting the deficit to 16-13.

From there, the Eagles began creating some distance. Blankenship scored on a 38-yard run with 6:37 remaining in the half, and Aidan Baker ran in the two-point conversion. Blankenship added a 1-yard touchdown before halftime, with Baker again converting to give Southern Gap a 32-13 advantage at the break.

"Man, the team played great. Great coaching. Line was blocking great," Blankenship said.

The Eagles kept the pressure on after halftime. Blankenship broke a 74-yard touchdown run for his fifth score, and Caden Justice added a 49-yard touchdown run. Baker supplied the two-point conversion after each score.

Capshaw and Absher connected for a third touchdown, this time from 30 yards out, and a successful two-point conversion gave Richlands its final points.

Gunner Baker scored on a 5-yard run, helping Southern Gap take a 54-21 lead into the fourth quarter. Reid Stiltner finished the scoring with a 10-yard touchdown run, followed by Matthew Thompson's extra point.

Aidan Baker added 105 rushing yards for Southern Gap. Justice finished with 66 yards and a touchdown on five carries, while Gunner Baker had 38 yards and a touchdown on five attempts.

White completed two of four passes for 43 yards, both to Ayden Whited. The Eagles finished with 585 yards of total offense, collected 25 first downs and did not punt.

Richlands, which fell to 0-6, got 204 passing yards and three touchdowns from Capshaw. Absher caught all three touchdown passes and finished with seven receptions for 152 yards.

Southern Gap held the Blue Tornado to 15 rushing yards on 17 attempts, and both White and freshman defensive back Mason Rife had an interception in the win.

Tester praised his staff's preparation and the work of defensive coach Brandon Davis.

"I couldn't be prouder of the coaches, staff, and the kids," Tester said.

He also knows what the Eagles have in their freshman running back.

"He's a game changer, and we all knew that, you know," Tester said. "We got three more years of him, so that's a good thing, and he's got some good talent com-

ing behind him."

For Blankenship, beating Richlands at home was another reason to enjoy the night.

"Man, it felt good. It felt good beating them, man," he said.

Still, he was already thinking about what needed attention when the Eagles returned to practice.

"I mean, it was a few mistakes, but hey, like I said, we'll get back at it Monday and fix it," Blankenship said.

Tester also spoke warmly of Edwards, recalling their days as college teammates.

"I love Bubba, man. You know, he blocked for me," Tester said.

The two have stayed in touch throughout the season, and Tester expressed confidence that Edwards would get Richlands headed in the right direction.

"I know he having it rough right now but he will get it figured out over there," Tester said.

Edwards said Richlands needed to improve its focus and preparation.

"We know, again, it's the same thing every week. We're young. We've got to overcome," Edwards said. "So let's hope we can, you know, put this behind us and move forward and try to get better next week."

Despite the result, Edwards had warm words for his former teammate and the program Tester is building.

"You know, Greg's one of my favorite guys. I love him. Nothing but respect for him," Edwards said. "And I knew that once he got this job, man, the sky's the limit for Southern Gap. And I'm glad to see him have success."

The two coaches met for a handshake at midfield after the game.

Southern Gap travels to Tazewell on Oct. 9 for another Southwest District matchup.

SCORING SUMMARY

SG - C. Blankenship 35 run (White run)
R - Absher 57 pass from Capshaw (Onate kick)
SG - Safety, Capshaw tackled by A. Baker
SG - C. Blankenship 31 run (pass failed)
R - Absher 21 pass from Capshaw (kick failed)
SG - C. Blankenship 38 run (A. Baker run)
SG - C. Blankenship 1 run (A. Baker run)
SG - C. Blankenship 74 run (A. Baker run)
SG - C. Justice 49 run (A. Baker run)
R - Absher 30 pass from Capshaw (Lawson run)
SG - G. Baker 5 run (pass failed)
SG - Stiltner 10 run (Thompson kick)

TEAM STATS

First Downs: R 9, SG 25; Rushes-Yards: R 17-15, SG 50-542; Passing Yards: R 204, SG 43; Comp.-Att.-Int.: R 15-32-2, SG 2-4-1; Fumbles-Lost: R 0-0, SG 2-2; Penalties-Yards: R 3-15, SG 4-30; Punts-Average: R 3-21.3, SG 0-0.



Southern Gap's Luke Stiltner and Gunner Baker sack Richlands quarterback Jamie Capshaw in the end zone for a first-quarter safety Friday, Oct. 2, at Smiley Ratliff Field. The play gave the Eagles a 10-7 lead on their way to a 61-21 victory (Photo by Chad Cooper).

School flu clinics scheduled Oct. 13-15 in Buchanan County

By CHAD COOPER

coopkam@gmail.com

Flu vaccination clinics are scheduled at Buchanan County schools and the school division's central office Oct. 13-15, with advance registration required.

The Cumberland Plateau Health District announced the three-day schedule, giving families time to complete registration before the clinics arrive at their schools.

Clinics will be held Oct. 13 at Riverview Elementary/Middle School and Southern Gap High School, including its vocational program.

The schedule continues Oct. 14 at Twin Valley Elementary/Middle School and Council Elementary/Middle School.

Clinics are scheduled Oct. 15 at the school division's central office and Tommy P. Justus Elementary/Middle School in Hurley.

Registration is available online at <https://redcap.link/cpschoolflu26>. Paper forms are also available at schools and health departments.

For more information, call the Buchanan County Health Department at 276-935-4591.

Buchanan schools offer supper, snacks for afterschool students

By CHAD COOPER

coopkam@gmail.com

Students staying after school in Buchanan County can receive supper and a snack through a meal program offered at five participating schools.

Buchanan County Public Schools announced Sept. 25 that it is sponsoring the Afterschool Meals Program, providing a third meal and a snack to all students attending afterschool programs at those locations.

The program gives participating students another opportunity to eat during the school day, with serving times scheduled around the start of afterschool activities.

At Southern Gap High School, supper and a snack will be served Monday through Thursday from 2:45 p.m. to 3 p.m.

At Hurley Elementary Middle School, meals and snacks will be available Monday through Friday from 3 p.m. to 3:15 p.m.

Council Elementary Middle School, Riverview Elementary Middle School and Twin Valley Elementary Middle School will serve supper and a snack Monday through Thursday from 3 p.m. to 3:15 p.m.

The announcement identifies students attending the participating schools' afterschool programs as those eligible to receive the meals and snacks.

Families seeking more information about the program can contact Rhonda Musick at rhonda.musick@bcpsk12.com or 276-935-4551, ext. 243.

Additional information is available through the Virginia Department of Education's Office of School and Community Nutrition Programs at 804-418-4735.

Buchanan County Public Schools is an equal opportunity provider.

Reach Over 1 Million Readers With This Ad!

No other media offers the audience of loyal, local, repeat readers you'll reach through community newspapers! We can target your message, statewide or regional.

Let Commonwealth Media Solutions do all the work for you at a discounted cost.

Reach
Virginia

Contact Kelly McCauley
(804) 521-7580

Commonwealth
Media Solutions

CONTACTS CARE

WORD SEARCH

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

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

WORDS

ASTIGMATISM
AXIS
CASE
CORNEA
CURVE
CYLINDER
DAILY
DIAMETER
DIOPTER
DISINFECTANT
DRYNESS
EXTENDED
HYDRATION
HYDROGEL
HYPOXIA
MULTIFOCAL
PERMEABILITY
PRESBYOPIA
RIGID
SALINE
SCLERAL
SOLUTION
TORIC
WETTABILITY

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
9 10 11 12
13 14 15
16 17 18
19 20 21 22
23 24 25 26
27 28 29 30
31 32 33
34 35 36 37
38 39 40 41 42
43 44 45 46 47
48 49 50 51 52
53 54 55
56 57 58 59

CLUES ACROSS

1. Difficult
5. Coarsely ground corn
9. A group of similar things ordered one after another
11. Loved Romeo
13. Something to solve
15. Pelvic areas
16. Informal debt instrument
17. Ineffective
19. A device attached to a workbench
21. Related on the mother's side
22. "Fresh Prince of ___ Air"
23. Astronomer Sagan
25. C. Utah city
26. Turkey
27. Informal terms for money
29. Awakens
31. Those who favored Prohibition
33. Blabbed
34. Looked through
36. Rhode Island rebellion
38. A type of "cast"
39. One's duty
41. Where golfers begin
43. Make a mistake
44. Semitic Sun god
46. Ancient Greek City
48. Removed someone's head
52. A place to stay
53. Unwise
54. Most unnatural
56. "Dennis" is a notable one
57. Ointments
58. Examination
59. Leaked fluid

CLUES DOWN

1. Brave
2. A state of excitement
3. Jest at
4. Sandwich store
5. Chapter of the Koran
6. Dismounted from a horse
7. Small vehicle
8. Irked
9. A disreputable man
10. Monetary unit of Samoa
11. A list of woes
12. Weight unit
14. Alone, single
15. Broadway legend Bernadette
18. Monetary unit of Serbia
20. Worn by exposure to the weather
24. A body of traditions
26. Students seek one
28. Hydrophilic amino acid
30. Nasal mucus
32. Branch of U.S. Congress
34. Swinish
35. Russian assembly
37. Grant an exemption to
38. Set up in advance
40. Satisfy
42. Felt
43. Mild yellow Dutch cheese made in balls
45. Witnesses
47. Strong insects
49. Gasteyer and de Armas are two
50. One of an ancient people inhabiting Scotland
51. Cheerless
55. Unhealthy

PUZZLE SOLUTION

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

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

SUDOKU

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

Level: Intermediate

WORD SCRAMBLE

Rearrange the letters to spell something pertaining to contacts.

ELCNA

Answer: Clean

GUESS WHO ?

I am a television producer, executive and talent manager born in England on October 7, 1959. My father got me a job in the mail room at his music publishing company. I left to start signing talent. Later, I became a talent judge on various singing and entertainment competition programs.

Answer: Simon Cowell

CRYPTO FUN

Solve the code to discover words related to contact lenses. Each number corresponds to a letter. (Hint: 25 = S)

A. 25 10 4 15 11 9 10 2
Clue: Cleaning liquid

B. 26 24 25 14
Clue: Container

C. 14 6 14 25
Clue: Sight organs

D. 26 10 2 11 24 26 11 25
Clue: Fixes vision

Answers: A solution B case C eyes D contacts

SUDOKU SOLUTION

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

Horoscopes

ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20
Aries, some free time opens up this week. Focus on social outings and keeping things light. Use the time to relax and re-charge.
TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21
Tact may be required in the days ahead, Taurus. You have strong opinions about how to approach a situation, but present your views with kindness and express a willingness to be flexible.
GEMINI – May 22/Jun 21
Gemini, save up your energy for something fun instead of getting swept up in someone else's drama. Patience is your best friend this week, even if it doesn't always come easy.
CANCER – Jun 22/Jul 22
You tend to be very careful with money, Cancer. Financial discipline is a great asset that will pay dividends for you in the days ahead.
LEO – Jul 23/Aug 23
You may find yourself in a highly visible position this week, Leo. That means you will need to be on your best behavior at all times. People will notice your every move.
VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22
Virgo, steer clear of any controversial subjects this week because they may escalate into something that can be off-putting for all involved. Try to keep your opinions to yourself.
LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23
Embrace a challenge for all it has to offer, Libra. A unique situation arises this week, and you can learn something about yourself and feel a strong sense of accomplishment.
SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22
Harsh words can be hard to forget, Scorpio. Be careful about how you communicate with others. Your intentions are good, so take a thoughtful approach to how to express them.
SAGITTARIUS – Nov 23/Dec 21
This week you are juggling many things, including work, appointments and family obligations. Optimism and patience will be key for the time being, Sagittarius.
CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20
Concerns about money may be on your mind, Capricorn. If you can get a handle on your finances, you will feel more secure about spending money.
AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Feb 18
There is no winning if you enter a fray between family members right now, Aquarius. It is best if you keep your distance and do your own thing this week.
PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20
Your input will be sought this week, Pisces. Carefully consider an emerging situation, and then use your critical thinking skills to come up with the right advice.
FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS
OCTOBER 4
Dakota Johnson, Actress (37)
OCTOBER 5
Travis Kelce, Athlete (37)
OCTOBER 6
Brett Gelman, Actor (50)
OCTOBER 7
Toni Braxton, Singer (59)
OCTOBER 8
Matt Damon, Actor (56)
OCTOBER 9
Megan Moroney, Singer (29)
OCTOBER 10
Dan Stevens, Actor (44)

CLASSIFIEDS

AUCTIONS

ATTN. AUCTIONEERS: Promote your upcoming auctions statewide! Affordable Print and Digital Solutions reaching your target audience. Call this paper or Commonwealth Media Solutions 804-521-7570, advertising@commonwealthmediasolutions.com

HOME IMP

No more cleaning out gutters. Guaranteed! LeafFilter is backed by a no-clog guarantee and lifetime transferable warranty. Call today 1-877-614-6667 to schedule a FREE inspection and no obligation estimate. Get 15% off your entire order. Plus, Military & Seniors get an additional 10% off. Limited time only. Restrictions apply, see representative for warranty and offer details.

Prepare for power outages today with a Generac Home Standby Generator. Act now to receive a FREE 5-Year warranty with qualifying purchase. Call 1-844-947-1479 today to schedule a free quote. It's not just a generator. It's a power move.

Replace your roof with the best looking and longest lasting material steel from Erie Metal Roofs! Three styles and multiple colors available. Guaranteed to last a lifetime! Limited Time Offer up to 50% off installation + Additional 10% off install (for military, health workers & 1st responders.) Call Erie Metal Roofs: 1-844-902-4611

LEGAL NOTICES

**Trustee's Sale
721 Route 721, Keen Mountain, VA 24624
(Parcel ID: 2HH055054)
(Parcel ID: 2HH055033)
(Parcel ID: 2HH055055)**

Default having been made in the terms of a certain Deed of Trust dated June 29, 2006, in the original principal amount of \$87,000.00 and recorded in the Clerk's Office of the Circuit Court of the County of Buchanan, Virginia on July 13, 2006, as Instrument Number 060002378, the undersigned Substitute Trustees will sell at public auction on November 09, 2026 at 1:00 PM, in front of the building housing the County of Buchanan Circuit Court, 1012 Walnut Street, Grundy, VA 24614, the property designated as SEVEN (7) LOTS AND ADJOINING 1/4TH ACRE TRACT, SITUATE ON LEVISA RIVER, AT KEEN MOUNTAIN, IN BUCHANAN COUNTY, VIRGINIA, AND SHOWN ON PLAT ENTITLED "MAP- SUBDIVISION OF PROPERTY OF EDGAR M. CALL***", WHICH PLAT IS OF RECORD IN THE CLERK'S OFFICE, IN PLAT BOOK NO. 2, PAGE 26. There is Excepted and Reserved from this conveyance such of the Coal, Oil, Gas and Other Minerals, Rights, Rights of Way, Privileges and Easements, if any, as may have been heretofore

**Kitchen Staff
Wanted**
Mountain Mission School (MMS) is seeking a cook/kitchen staff. Position is part-time but may develop into full-time. Please apply online at www.mmskids.org or at the Administration Office 1760 Edgewater Dr. Grundy, VA

LEGAL NOTICES

Excepted, or conveyed from said Land by Proper Owners thereof. Sale is subject to all prior liens, easements, restrictions, covenants, and conditions, if any, of record, or other matters which would be disclosed by an accurate survey or inspection of the premises. TERMS: CASH. A deposit of \$9,000.00 or 10% of the sale price, whichever is lower, will be required of the successful bidder at time of sale. Prior to the sale, interested bidders will be required to register with and must present a bid deposit which may be held during the sale by the trustee. The bid deposit must be certified funds and/or cash, but no more than \$9,900.00 of cash will be accepted. The successful bidder's deposit will be retained at the sale and applied to the sale price. If held by the trustee, all other bid deposits will be returned to the unsuccessful bidders. Settlement is to be made within 15 days. The successful bidder will be responsible for obtaining possession of the property, and for all costs and fees related to recording the Trustee's Deed, including the grantors tax. The successful bidder will be required to execute a Memorandum of Trustee's Sale, available for review upon request before the sale, outlining additional terms of sale and settlement. A Trustee's Deed will be prepared by Trustee's attorney at high bidder's expense. This is a communication from a debt collector. Tromberg, Miller, Morris & Partners, PLLC on behalf of Southeast Equity Trustees, LLC and/or NFPDS-VA LLC, Substitute Trustee(s), 5310 Markel Road, Suite 201, Richmond, VA 23230, File No. 26-002346-VA, Tel: 804-525-1570. VAM 10-1,8,15;2026

**PUBLIC NOTICE
APPLICATION FOR
REISSUANCE OF
NPDES PERMIT
NO. 0082067
UNDER CHAPTER 19,
TITLE 45.2 OF THE
CODE OF VIRGINIA
Publication Number: 26NXA02
Application Number: 1011942**

The Black Diamond Company of 1073 Riverview Street, Grundy, VA 24614 is applying to the Virginia Mined Land Repurposing Program for reissuance of NPDES Permit No. 0082067. The operation is located in Buchanan County along Bee Tree Branch of Cow Fork and along Middle Fork of Hunts Creek, directly off Route 610. The permit is situated on the Elkhorn City USGS 7.5 Minute Topographic Quadrangle Map. The acreage for this operation is 53.06 acres. Surface runoff from the permit will be discharged into Middle Fork of Russell Fork of the Big Sandy River. 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 Application 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 (October 22, 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 concern-

LEGAL NOTICES

ing 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-10-1,8,15,22;2026

**TRUSTEE'S SALE
OF PROPERTY
2689 Laural Branch Road,
Vansant, VA 24656**

Tax Map No. 2HH209002B In execution of a Deed of Trust dated February 27, 2023, in the principal amount of \$153,400.61, recorded in the Clerk's Office of the Circuit Court of Buchanan County, Virginia, as Instrument Number 230000274, Woods Rogers Vandeverter Black PLC, Substitute 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 October 13, 2026 at 12:00 noon, the property described in said Deed of Trust lying in Buchanan County, Virginia, and more particularly described as follows, to-wit:-

All that certain tract or parcel of land, with the improvements thereon and all rights, privileges and appurtenances thereunto belonging situate, lying and being on Laurel Branch, a tributary of the Russell Fork River of the Big Sandy River in Buchanan County, Virginia, and being more particularly bounded and described as follows: BEGINNING at an iron pin in the center of County Road 663, a corner adjoining Rand and Kathy Gilbert; thence going up the hill with the Gilbert line, N. 45 deg. 08' 32" W. 294.34 feet to a set pin; thence N. 23 deg. 37' 39" E. 319.37 feet to a set iron pin; thence S. 45 deg. 08' 32" E. 292.59 feet to an unmarked point in County Road 663; thence along said road, S. 24 deg. 35' 07" W. 115.79 feet to an unmarked point near the center of County Road 663; thence S. 22 deg. 37' 47" W. 204.86 feet to the point of BEGINNING, containing 2 acres, more or less. Pursuant to Section 8.9A-604 of the Virginia Code, a 2022 TRU Manufactured Home, Serial No. CWP054288TNAB 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 VANDEVERTER BLACK PLC Substitute Trustee For Information Contact: Woods Rogers Vandeverter Black PLC, P.O. Box 14125, Roanoke, VA 24038-4125, Telephone: 540-983-7729 VAM-10-1,8;2026

**PUBLIC NOTICE
APPLICATION FOR RE-
NEWAL/REISSUANCE OF
COAL SURFACE MINING/
NPDES PERMIT NO.
1202170/0082170
UNDER CHAPTER 19,
TITLE 45.2 OF THE
CODE OF VIRGINIA
Publication Number: 26NXA03
Application Number: 1011935**

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. 1202170, to continue the operations at the following location: The operation is located in Buchanan County along Cow Fork of Grassy Creek and is approximately 2.3 miles NE of Breaks, VA. The permit is situated on the Elkhorn City USGS 7.5 Minute Topographic Quadrangle Map. The acreage for this operation is 56.67 acres. Drainage will pass through sediment control structures and will be discharged into Tilley Fork and Abes Fork of Russell Fork of the Big Sandy River. The existing discharge locations may be viewed on the Renewal Map which is attached in Section 21.2 of the application. Ad-

LEGAL NOTICES

ditional discharge details are available in the NPDES Application 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 October 15, 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

LEGAL NOTICES

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-9-24,10-1,8,15;2026

SERVICES

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

Consumer Cellular - the same reliable, nationwide coverage as the largest carriers. No long-term contract, no hidden fees and activation is free. All plans feature unlimited talk and text, starting at just \$20/month. For more information, call 1-855-262-5564

INVITATION TO BID

Date: October 7, 2026

**ABATEMENT AND DEMOLITION
BUCHANAN COUNTY CAREER TECHNOLOGY
& HIGHER LEARNING CENTER
GRUNDY, VIRGINIA**

Sealed bids are invited for the demolition of the vacant Buchanan County Career Technology & Higher Learning Center facility located in Grundy, Virginia. Demolition includes removal of all structures on the property, foundations, concrete sidewalks and steps and asphalt as described within the Invitation to Bid. Scope also includes abatement of hazardous materials.

No prevailing wage or certified payroll requirements apply. Contractor to provide applicable bonds and insurance per requirements noted within the IFB and submit a Contractor's Qualification Statement (AIA A305-2020).

All bids must be submitted in a sealed envelope or package clearly marked "Bid for Abatement and Demolition – Buchanan County Career Technology & Higher Learning Center". Sealed bids will be received at Buchanan County Public Schools located at 4447 Slate Creek Road, Grundy, Virginia 24614 before 2:00 PM on October 29, 2026. Bids will be opened and publicly read on October 29, 2026, at 2:00 PM.

A Mandatory Pre-Bid Conference will be held at the vacant Buchanan County Career Technology & Higher Learning Center located at 1124 Almarine Drive, Grundy, VA on October 9, 2026 at 1:00 pm.

Bidders must be a properly licensed contractor in the State of Virginia as a Class A General Contractor. A bid bond is required. The Contractor, in performance of this contract, shall comply with all applicable Equal Opportunity requirements. MBE/WBE firms are encouraged to submit bids. If requested, Bidders must certify that they do not or will not maintain or provide for their employees any facilities that are segregated based on race, color, creed, or national origin.

The Invitation for Bids for the above project, including the specifications, contractual terms and conditions and other information necessary for bidding, may be obtained at <https://www.bcpsk12.com/en-US> or by contacting Curtis Elswick at curtis.elswick@skanska.com or at 540-423-2860.

The Buchanan County Public Library Library Director

The Buchanan County Public Library is accepting resumes for the position of **Library Director**.

The basic requirements are listed as follows:

Candidates must demonstrate expertise in public library operations including, administration, personnel, and fiscal and facility management. Critical skills needed include: community services, budgeting, financial planning, grant writing, and outreach services. The library director will report to a governing board of trustees.

Candidates must have the ability to effectively and positively represent the library before community groups and the public, consistent with the library's vision, mission, and strategic plan. They must have the ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with staff, library board of trustees, the Friends of the Buchanan County Public Library, community leaders, public officials, leaders of educational and civic organizations, and the general public.

Candidates must be reliable with satisfactory attendance and be able to communicate by phone, email, text, and instant message. They must be able to sit at a desk or stand for prolonged periods of time. They must be able to use a computer which requires repetitive wrist, hand and finger motion and extensive screen time. They must be able to lift 35lbs and push up to 150 lbs. on wheels. They must be able to travel independently to off-site meetings, workshops and community events.

Educational Requirements: Master of Library Science degree from an American Library Association accredited program and be eligible for a Librarian's Professional Certificate issued by the Library of Virginia. The duties, responsibilities and requirements listed above should not be interpreted as a comprehensive list. Additional duties and responsibilities may be assigned as deemed appropriate and may change at any time with or without notice.□

Successful candidates will be required to reside in Buchanan County within 6 months of employment.

Salary: To be based upon experience, anticipated to be between \$50,000-\$60,000. Health, dental, vacation, and retirement benefits will be provided by the county.

To Apply: Submit a cover letter, resume, and three work related references by Nov. 1, 2026.

Submit applications to: Chairperson Board of Trustees, Buchanan County Public Library, 1185 Poe Town ST, Grundy, VA 24614.

Inquiries may be addressed to Teresa Matney, acting Director at 276-935-5721.

Buchanan County Public Library is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Breaks Interstate Park Commission will hold a regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, October 15 at Breaks Park Conference Center, 627 Commission Circle in Breaks, VA 24607. The meeting will begin at 11:00 a.m.

Authorized by: Grondall Potter,
Commission Chairman



From left, Judge Reece Robertson joins Buchanan County Recovery Court graduates Heather Matney, James Rogers and Chris Sage following their graduation ceremony Sept. 29.

Three graduate from Buchanan County Recovery Court

By CHAD COOPER
coopkam@gmail.com

Heather Matney, James Rogers and Chris Sage marked a milestone in their recovery journeys Tuesday, Sept. 29, when they graduated from Buchanan County Recovery Court.

The ceremony brought an emotional day for those who gathered to recognize the graduates, according to an announcement from the program. Recovery Court expressed pride in all three and pledged continued support as they move forward.

Several speakers helped make the occasion personal. Dale Hibbitts spoke on Sage's behalf, D Jay Horn spoke

on Rogers' behalf and Jimmy Penley spoke on Matney's behalf.

Recovery Court participant Marlena Robinson also addressed the gathering on behalf of the program's participants.

Commonwealth's Attorney Nikki Stiltner delivered remarks that organizers described as heartfelt.

The program thanked Pastor Shea Shrader of Harman Memorial Baptist Church, Shannon Fuller and the crew at ACCAP for helping make the graduation possible. Double Kwik catered the food.

In its announcement, Recovery Court shared a message of encouragement for the graduates: "James, Heather, and Chris, we are all here for you and are so proud of you."

BCSO investigator Scott recognized for compassion toward young victims

By CHAD COOPER
coopkam@gmail.com

For a child coping with violence, a coloring page, a walk, or someone willing to listen can offer a moment of comfort. Those acts of care helped earn Buchanan County Sheriff's Office investigator Lora Scott a written commendation for her service to victims.

Mary Beth Burkes, a domestic violence advocate with People Inc. of Virginia, praised Scott in a Sept. 17 letter to Buchanan County Sheriff Allen Boyd, describing an investigator whose compassion extends beyond the demands of gathering evidence and working cases.



Burkes wrote that she had personally observed Scott's work in several juvenile cases and witnessed her patience, attentiveness and concern for the young people involved.

"I have seen her demonstrate an extraordinary level of patience, compassion, attentiveness, and genuine care for the victims she serves," Burkes wrote.

The letter described Scott spending hours with young victims — coloring, drawing, playing games, taking walks and talking. Burkes said those moments help provide a sense of normalcy for children facing circumstances that are anything but normal.

"For a child whose sense of safety and innocence has been shattered by the actions of another person, those moments matter," she wrote.

Burkes said having a caring adult nearby can reassure children that they are not alone and that someone cares about what happens to them.

The commendation also highlighted Scott's humility. Burkes wrote that other acts of kindness could be shared, but she believed Scott would prefer to keep them private.

"It is obvious that she does not serve victims for recognition or praise. She simply sees a need and responds to it," Burkes wrote.

Throughout the letter, Burkes emphasized Scott's ability to balance her investigative responsibilities with concern for the person at the center of each case. Victims, she wrote, may be frightened, confused and struggling to understand what happened to them.

Burkes said the difference Scott makes may never appear in a report or be measured in statistics, but can remain with the people she helps throughout their lives.

"Please know that her efforts have been noticed, they are deeply appreciated, and they matter," Burkes wrote.

Buchanan County Sheriff's Office investigator Lora Scott was commended in a Sept. 17 letter from People Inc. of Virginia domestic violence advocate Mary Beth Burkes for her compassion and dedication to helping young victims of violence.

Free livestock emergency response training set for Oct. 15

By CHAD COOPER
coopkam@gmail.com

Buchanan County first responders and others who may encounter livestock during highway emergencies have an opportunity to attend free training on Oct. 15 in Clintwood.

The Bovine Emergency Response Plan training will begin at 8 a.m. at the Coalfield Agriculture Center, 449 Agriculture Drive. The program is free and includes lunch, but registration is required.

The training is designed to help emergency personnel safely approach and handle highway accidents involving livestock and the vehicles transporting them. Such incidents can leave responders dealing with loose or injured animals while also managing an accident scene.

The program is intended to reach law enforcement officers, firefighters, emergency medical services personnel, animal control officers, veterinarians and others involved in emergency responses.

Continuing education credits are available, including seven hours for law enforcement officers, four hours for veterinarians and eight hours for animal control officers. Credits are also available for fire and EMS personnel.

Virginia Farm Bureau's safety program and the Virginia Cattle Industry Board sponsor the event.

Participants can register at <https://vafb.swoogo.com/berp-clintwood/13126602> or scan the QR code on the event flyer.

For more information, contact Mark Campbell at 804-366-3858 or Mark.campbell@vafb.com, or Jake Tabor at 540-616-5159 or Jake.tabor@vafb.com.

Buchanan schools report 2,047 students, plus 103 preschoolers

By CHAD COOPER
coopkam@gmail.com

Buchanan County Public Schools reported 2,047 students in kindergarten through 12th grade during the opening month of the 2026-27 academic year, with another 103 children enrolled in pre-K.

Superintendent Sherry Fletcher presented the enrollment and attendance update to the Buchanan County School Board during its Sept. 15 meeting at the Government Center on Slate Creek.

The August report covered seven school days through Aug. 31. Including pre-K, the division served 2,150 students across its five schools.

Southern Gap High School had the largest enrollment with 798 students in grades eight through 12. That included 182 eighth graders, 144 ninth graders, 158 10th graders, 160 11th graders and 154 seniors.

Riverview Elementary/Middle School enrolled 642 students in kindergarten through seventh grade. Its enrollment included 88 kindergarteners, 93 first graders, 69 second graders, 77 third graders, 86 fourth graders, 66 fifth graders, 103 sixth graders and 60 seventh graders. The school also had 66 pre-K students.

Hurley Elementary/Middle School reported 231 students in kindergarten through seventh grade. The school had 35 kindergarteners, 26 first graders, 35 second graders, 20 third graders, 42 fourth graders, 29 fifth graders, 20 sixth graders and 24 seventh graders. An additional 10 children were enrolled in pre-K.

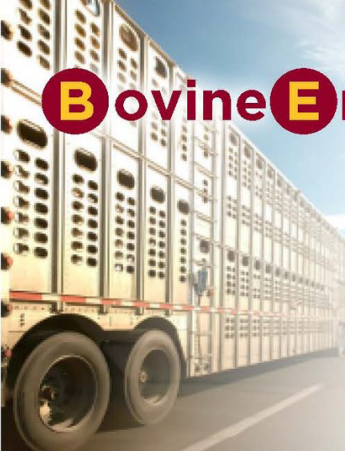
Twin Valley Elementary/Middle School had 222 students in kindergarten through seventh grade. Grade counts included 38 kindergarteners, 25 first graders, 24 second graders, 33 third graders, 26 fourth graders, 27 fifth graders, 29 sixth graders and 20 seventh graders. The school also enrolled 16 pre-K students.

Council Elementary/Middle School reported 154 students in kindergarten through seventh grade. Enrollment included 19 kindergarteners, 13 first graders, 12 second graders, 30 third graders, 10 fourth graders, 30 fifth graders, 18 sixth graders and 22 seventh graders. Another 11 children attended pre-K.

The division reported an average attendance rate of 95.29% for August.

Southern Gap led the five schools with an attendance rate of 97.29%. Council followed at 95.92%, while Twin Valley reported 94.64%, Riverview recorded 94.54% and Hurley posted 94.04%.

Each school reported attendance above 94% during the opening seven days of the academic year.



Attend a Bovine Emergency Response Plan training event near you

This training is intended to educate and train first responders and others on how best to handle a highway accident involving livestock and livestock transporters.

With an estimated several hundred thousand head of cattle transported on roadways each day in the U.S., first responders are often tasked with responding to scenes involving loose or injured livestock. The BERP training helps to better prepare emergency response personnel to safely approach and work a livestock transportation incident.

Continuing education credits available for:

- Law Enforcement (7hrs)
- Veterinarians (4hrs)
- Fire & EMS personnel
- Animal control officers (8hrs)

October 15

8AM start time at:

Coalfield Agriculture Center
449 Agriculture Dr.,
Clintwood, VA 24228

This program is free and lunch will be provided.
Registration Required.

CLICK HERE or scan this QR code to register



For more information, contact:
Mark Campbell 804-366-3858 Mark.campbell@vafb.com
Jake Tabor 540-616-5159 Jake.tabor@vafb.com

Sponsored by

