

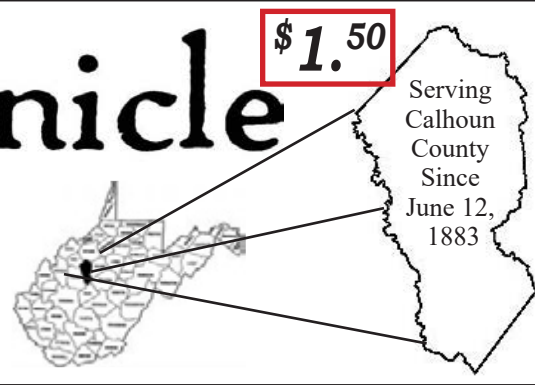


The Calhoun Chronicle

and

The Grantsville News

“Good Government, Pure Homes and Godly Hearts”



Whole Number 7237

Grantsville, West Virginia 26147

Thursday, August 20, 2026

Calhoun County Achieves Milestones On Way to Water Service Expansion

By Stephen Smoot

Calhoun County Commission President Eric Lupardus shared “it’s been a great week for Calhoun County and an important step forward in our long-term effort to improve and expand water infrastructure.” Two separate milestones moved major projects one step closer to service.

It is important to note the limited role that the County

Commission has in supporting and working with the local public service districts. Boards running these entities take responsibility for day-to-day operations, such as maintenance, billing, and managing their teams. County Commissions can support PSDs by pursuing funding, helping to plan system expansion, and securing the partnerships needed to continue upgrades for customers.

Said Lupardus “we absolutely have a responsibility

to advocate for the systems we represent.” He shared that local officials meet with those on the state level, including Speaker of the House Roger Hanshaw “three or four times a month” to discuss water system progress and needs.

Good news came in the form of announcements of progress. The Norman Ridge Water Extension Project received a final easement signature, the last hurdle to

MILESTONES cont. on page 4

WEST VIRGINIA

STATE FIRE MARSHAL

EST. 1909

West Virginia State Fire Marshal Home Safety Assessment

Helping You Protect What Matters Most

This QR code connects with a brief survey on home fire safety that also connects to important tips and information.

West Virginia State Fire Marshal Releases Home Digital Safety Survey

By Stephen Smoot

Ken Tyree, West Virginia State Fire Marshal, would like to ask a few minutes of your time.

The time invested now could pay off in saving a life.

The United States Fire Administration reports that West Virginia in 2023 experienced 5.5 deaths and 7.6 injuries per 1,000 fires. Deaths came in at over double the national average of 2.1 and well over the injury rate of 6.4.

When it comes to residential deaths and injuries, the numbers grow more ominous. In 2023, the Mountain State saw 15.8 deaths per residential structure fire, triple the national average. Injuries in residential fires, 19.7 per 1,000, matched the national rate.

With fire departments around West Virginia and across the nation seeing challenges on multiple fronts, every potential measure to bring those numbers down deserves consideration. Ken Tyree, West Virginia State Fire Marshal, found one opportunity online.

“I was on the net and a person I didn’t even know was pushing . . . community risk reduction.” he shared. That took him to a company called Virtual CRR, who now has provided the State Fire Marshal’s Office with a new tool to help to educate and prevent fires and related death and injury. It takes the form of a simple survey that the Tyree hopes every West Virginian and some point will answer.

As Moorefield Volunteer Fire Department Chief Doug Mongold explains, “it is important because we are trying to get information to help lower the fire death rate.” Tyree calls that death rate “unacceptable.”

The survey works along multiple tracks. It asks ques-

tions about smoke alarm, carbon monoxide alarm, fire extinguisher ownership and use. The survey also inquires about safety knowledge and also home health oxygen equipment. Information gathered gives fire officials a more clear picture of their community.

Getting that clear picture helps state and local officials because “it’s an opportunity to deliver something to everyone because there are differences in our rural and geographical circumstances” throughout the state.

Additionally the respondent, based on how he or she answers the questions, will receive information on how to make the home safer and also on house fire escape planning.

People will also learn through taking the survey. “A lot of people don’t realize they should be sleeping with their door closed at night,” offered Tyree. The survey asks that specific question as well. Tyree explained that a closed door offers “an extra layer of safety” that allows time for residents to detect the fire before inhaling too much smoke.

The Fire Marshal also hopes that individuals will be proactive in helping others learn about and even complete the survey, which can be taken on a smartphone or a computer via a link at the State Fire Marshal’s Office website. “Take it to an elderly parent or neighbor,” he urges, then asks that if they need assistance, to “help them take it.”

“As a senior fire official,” Tyree stated, “I’ve taken a huge step and a huge challenge” in working to promote the survey “county by county, community by community.” He hopes to get at least 25 percent in the first 12 to 15 months.

Shortage of Lawyers in Some Areas and Effects On Community

By Stephen Smoot

“I am reaching out on behalf of the 13th Judicial Circuit [now the 8th Judicial Circuit], to make you aware of a crisis in Kanawha County which directly impacts access to justice in our community. Within the last 10 years, the number of lawyers willing to serve as Court Appointed Counsel for criminal defendants (both misdemeanor and felony), Juvenile Abuse and Neglect, Guardians ad Litem, and Juvenile criminal matters has gone from an estimated 63 to 11. Kanawha County is currently in a situation where indigent defendants are in imminent danger of being denied their basic Constitutional rights and children have no representation in situations of abuse and neglect.” Judge Maryclaire Ak-

ers 13th Judicial Circuit December 30, 2024.

About 30 years ago, the legal profession in the United States appeared saturated. Experts warned young people to avoid the field of law because of the difficulty of finding jobs and careers. Anecdotally, people spoke of law school graduates taking paralegal jobs because of the dearth of opportunities.

Three decades later the Mountain State, particularly smaller communities, now see shortages of lawyers. Having too few lawyers creates both social and an economic issue. As Judge Akers shared, fewer lawyers mean fewer court-appointed attorneys for indigent defendants.

When most think of lawyers, they often imagine tele-

“This Is Not Some Future Problem. It Is Here Now”
Fixing the Lawyer Shortage



A third generation rural community attorney stated that "a courthouse without lawyers is like a hospital without doctors."

By Stephen Smoot

“West Virginia loses a net of approximately 45 attorneys each year, and one-quarter of the private bar plans to retire in the next five years. This is not some future problem. It is here now.

Isaac Sponaugle, Pendleton County attorney and former House Minority Leader in the West Virginia House of Delegates, is a third-generation attorney in Franklin. The retirement of his father George moved Pendleton County into “legal desert” status, having less than one lawyer for every 1,000 residents.

A community cannot run without sufficient lawyers because so much of what individuals and businesses do touches the law at some level. “A courthouse without enough lawyers is like a hospital without enough doctors. The building is open, but the help is not there,” said Sponaugle.

Calhoun County Commission President Eric Lupardus explained how that looks in day to day operations, stating “we’ve had trouble finding fiduciary commissioners to help close issues in the County Clerk’s Office. It doesn’t pay much and attorneys don’t want to do it anymore.” Those commissioners work to help people get estates closed.

Sponaugle explains that “people tend to think a lawyer shortage is a problem for lawyers. It is not.” He goes on to add that “it is a problem for the family that cannot get a hearing scheduled, the farmer who cannot close on his land, and the child waiting for a courtroom that cannot find an attorney to represent her.”

This creates barriers and challenges for the most vulnerable people who turn to the law for help or need a defense. “Too often, people must drive an hour or two to find a lawyer or try to navigate the matter on their own.”

Over the past year, a commission empowered by the West Virginia State Supreme Court has studied potential solutions posed at the national level. Across the United States, state supreme courts have taken the lead on wrestling with the looming lawyer shortage in many geographic areas and importantly, in court-appointed criminal defense work.

One potential solution offered involves “easing restrictions for out-of-state lawyers to practice in West Virginia. For instance, the Mountain State has a higher bar exam pass score than most neighboring states. It also suggests lowering reciprocity requirements and fees for out of state attorneys to work in West Virginia.

Kevin Harris from Ripley-based Harris and Holmes represents Calhoun County in various issues and sees a related problem. He identified part of the problem as lying within the state’s only law school itself. He stated that “we have to have a West Virginian as the Dean of the College of Law.”

“The school has fallen in love with US News and World Report rankings,” said Harris. He went on to explain that higher required scores for entry into law school itself serve as a barrier of entry to bright and talented West Virginians. Those prospective students might fall short on testing, but have solid academic records, the proper letters of recommendation, and, very important, roots in their communities.

Harris described how the state has three medical

SHORTAGE cont. on page 4

LAWYER cont. on page 4

Little Treasures

By Stephen Smoot

Last week The Atlantic, put out an article called “Throw Your Children’s Art Away.” That publication, a New York-based thought journal that intentionally rides the fence between liberalism and Leftism, does turn out thoughtful pieces from time to time.

But was this one of them?

Children create art for different reasons than adults. With a child’s limited vocabulary, emotional understanding, and ability to articulate, crayons can speak more eloquently, or forcefully, than language at times. They also learn quickly that making a nice picture makes parents, grandparents, teachers, or others happy. When he or she wants to put a smile on an adult’s face, a bit of child art does the trick.

They also use art as a way to convey their idealism. Children can draw or paint the world they want, whether it is plausible or fanciful.

Regardless of why or how done, children’s art also has a practical positive outcome. Any time a child reads a book, actively plays outside or inside, listens to music and thinks about it, or creates their art, this builds brain power. Crayons build minds and intellectual capabilities while interactive screens do not.

The article, written by Mary Townsend, a professor of Philosophy at St. John’s University in New York, focuses on parents who do keep every piece of art that their children create. Part of the context of articles in a publication like The Atlantic include their audience. Most who consume that publication have advanced degrees, are upper middle class or wealthy, but since they are also generally urban they live in more constricted spaces and perspectives than most of those who live outside of cities.

Her arguments reflect a focus on the short-term and the “now.” What is the meaning of art created by a child now? What utilitarian, or practical, purpose does it serve the child and the parent? Are the parent’s purposes for keeping the art more or less important than the child’s in creating it?

Townsend argues that the utilitarian purpose lies almost entirely in the creation of the art, that it has a limited “shelf life” of meaning. She asserts that parents trying to hold onto art either want to make tangible the ephemeral elements of a childhood moment, which are usually forgotten not long after the fact, or that parents subconsciously keep the art out of pride or their own anxiety about mortality.

“The point of life isn’t to prolong youth, but to have grown up.” she states.

Classical Greece started the Western tendency to categorize human endeavors separately, but the ancient method of passing down knowledge was the chronicle form. For example, the Old Testament serves as a chronicle of the Jewish people up to classical times. It contains in more or less intertwined fashion theology, history, law, philosophy, and even art. The Old Testament does not separate these aspects intentionally, but gives it as a full story of the Chosen People of God.

Russia created in its history the Primary Chronicle telling its early story. King Alfred the Great of Anglo-Saxon England started the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle during his reign. For between two and three centuries monks continued to add stories to it, thus creating a rich tapestry of work. Though it may lack complete historical accuracy, it does relate well the times and people of early Middle Ages England.

A child’s art is their chronicle, whether they draw, write, or record themselves singing. It serves as their response to the world around them, telling about love, fear, hopes, dreams, or that they want to eat cake for dinner. Some of it has significance, other pieces just doodle away the time.

Townsend is correct to say that the creation of the art has significance, but loses

the point in arguing that no practical reason exists to keep it.

She points to parental nostalgia as an insufficient reason to keep childhood art, yet that word understates the meaning. Nostalgia, as defined by Merriam-Webster, involves a “wistful or sentimental yearning” for “some real or romanticized past” that often brings “happy memories or emotions.”

Townsend properly states that childhood art can inspire these feelings, but is wrong when she diminishes the utility of this. What negative can come from a middle aged mother and father of an adult child pulling out a box of old drawings and paintings to reminisce about their children? How many forgotten memories of family life can resurface when reexamining these treasures?

And of course the time spent with loved ones sharing great memories in itself becomes a wonderful remembrance.

When cleaning out my father’s house after he passed, I came across two pieces of childhood art. One was a creation of mine that I had made in kindergarten for St. Valentine’s Day. I cut shapes of hearts and pasted both the heart and the cutout on construction paper, then wrote “I love you Daddy” on it. My Dad hung it on his wall and kept the object d’art his entire life.

Only as an adult did I realize what this must have meant to him. That previous year, he and my mother had split up, headed for divorce. My Dad moved out that year. As an adult, I know that this was a reaffirmation for him and must have helped to heal. I was five and didn’t get that at that age, but I sure do now.

Another piece of childhood art, in a sense, came from my father. He, who later became director of employee communications for United Parcel Service, had submitted stories at the ages of 16 and 17 to Sports Illustrated. His writings reflected correct grammar but, alas, did not have much else going for them. I met my wife after my father passed and these writings helped me to not only learn more about his progress in his writing (he did become very good) but also tell her more about him.

Similarly, in art that I have from my own children, I have a chronicle of their lives to share. As they grow older and have children, their own children will wonder about what their parents were like as children. My son a few years back came into my office and saw one of his own masterpieces from childhood, a tin can with paper glued to it, painted pasta glued to that, and a message for Dad. He made it when he was four and I still keep pens and pencils in it. I see it and my 5’11 veteran young man instantly reverts to the skinny little kid who was always smiling and running somewhere with a ball.

Those memories make the mind and heart feel good in that moment. One cannot understate the value of this, especially in times of stress.

And here is the greatest value of keeping childhood art. Parents have a very different perspective about their children’s childhood than their children. One can learn so much about one’s Mom or Dad from one’s grandparents. When they haul out the childhood art, the old videos, and photo albums, a grandchild gets a marvelous history lesson.

Part of growing up, and growing old, involves curiosity and wonder about the past. An adult might look back at his or her own childhood art and divine meaning from it not understood before. Children can look at their parent’s juvenile creations and learn so much about who they were, and also are.

That is the point of a chronicle, to not only hand down the facts, but the feelings, the thoughts, and the sensations of the past. Keep your kids’ art, maybe not every scrap, but anything that evokes something meaningful, even if they just handed it to you and said “I love you!”

Because time will tell just how valuable they are.

Home Country

Slim Randles

I always wondered what it would be like to putter. I don’t mean golf. I haven’t done that kind of puttering since I played miniature golf in high school. That wagon wheel always messed me up, so I decided to leave my golf career right there and participate in more active pursuits.

But now here I am puttering. This came about naturally because my doctor told me to slow down, and I plan to enjoy every snail-like minute of this advice. Part of it is my age (I’m in double figures now. And they ain’t small double figures.) and part is my doctor giving me advice I’ve been wanting to hear for a long time now.

This morning I was puttering around the ol’ back yard doing a few chores, but I did them slowly. Oh yes. Scoop some dog stuff and then rest. Water some baby trees, then take a time out, just like I’d done something wrong. Then there’s putting bird food in the feeders we have all over the yard.

I didn’t putter while feeding, either. No, I slowed it down even more and moseyed. Later, after the buzzards and finches had dined, I celebrated by

meandering. Meandering simply means moseying, but without any destination in mind.

Getting on in years can mean being celebrated for sedentary pursuits, like contemplating stuff. I usually do my contemplations from a chair. It helps. What am I contemplating? Well, when I’m asked, I just get a look on my face that says I’m helping Stephen Hawking out by figuring out the Grand Imperial Theory of Dang Near Everything. But I don’t actually say that, because that would leave me open to some nosey person asking me a question about it. And the truth was, I was thinking about what to have for lunch, but it isn’t as cerebral as Hawking’s theory. It isn’t even as cerebral as a hemorrhage. Now there’s something worth a good contemplation. The spelling of hemorrhage, of course. One m and two r’s? Have to think on that a while. Might even reflect on it while I deliberate. No one said getting older was for amateurs.

Z-Z-Z-Z

Brought to you by the kids from Make-a-Wish Foundation. A gift from you will make you smile. 1-800-722-WISH.

Exploring Rate Costs

Why our power bills are so much is a constant question we face at the Commission.

And there are no simple answers nor easy solutions.

Time Magazine (JAN 21, 2026 3:28 PM ET) told me earlier this year that from 2021 to 2025, electric rates in this country rose nearly 30 percent, far outpacing inflation.

See: 5 Big Reasons Why Electricity Prices Are So High Right Now

From January to October last year, average electric bills increased by nearly 13 percent.

And Time says there is little expectation for changes in the future.

Like you, I am concerned about my power bill. All of us are. I search for ways to reduce my bills, as I am sure you do. I also look for answers.

Inflation is one problem. Things just cost more now than they did five years ago.

Time also credits aging transmission lines and auxiliary structures. The infrastructure of most electric lines in the United States was built in the 1960s and 1970s, and sometimes much before that in West Virginia. Some transmission lines are more than a quarter-century old. They are approaching their life cycle’s end, and they need to be replaced.

The various transmission grids – the largest of which serves West Virginia – are in the same shape. Most of the cost of those upgrades is going to have to be passed on to ratepayers.

Another, and recently acerbated, problem is tariffs. Many of these upgrades will have to rely on steel and aluminum,



PSC Chair Charlotte Lane

most of which we import.

With the administration raising tariffs on several imports, that is going to add to your electricity bill.

According to Time, and I quote here: “A report from Payless Power, a Texas electricity company, found that increasingly hotter summers have contributed to a 400 percent increase in utility rates since the mid-1970s. The report found that the average American household paid about \$784 for electricity during the summer of 2025, 6% higher than in 2024.

I found this article by Time to be both upsetting and interesting. It at least gives us some idea of what has happened and what we can now expect.

Even with all of these trends, your Public Service Commission does its best to make sure that electricity is affordable.

Roane General Hospital Expands Specialty Care with Rheumatology Services Through Partnership with WVU Medicine

Spencer, W.Va. — Roane General Hospital is pleased to announce the addition of rheumatology services at Roane General Medical Clinic through its partnership with WVU Medicine Thomas Hospitals. The new specialty service brings expert care for patients with arthritis, autoimmune diseases and other rheumatic conditions closer to home.

WVU Medicine physicians Muhamed Abubacker, MD, and Ahsan Iqbal, MD, are now accepting patients at Roane General Medical Clinic. Board-certified in rheumatology, they provide comprehensive evaluation and treatment for a wide range of rheumatic and autoimmune conditions, including rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis, psoriatic arthritis, lupus, ankylosing spondylitis, gout, connective tissue diseases, vasculitis, osteoporosis and other inflammatory disorders.

"Our partnership with Roane General Hospital reflects our shared commitment to expanding access to high-quality specialty care across the region," said Dr. Greg Rosencrance, president and CEO of WVU Medicine Thomas Hospitals. "By bringing rheumatology services closer to home, we're helping patients receive the

expert care they need without the added burden of traveling long distances. This is another important step in strengthening healthcare access for the communities we serve and demonstrates what's possible when hospitals work together to meet local healthcare needs."

The addition of rheumatology services expands Roane General Hospital's growing network of specialty care providers, allowing patients throughout Roane County and the surrounding region to receive specialty care without traveling far.

"Expanding access to specialty care close to home is a priority for Roane General Hospital," said Doug Bentz, Roane General Hospital CEO. "Our partnership with WVU Medicine Thomas Hospitals allows us to bring experienced rheumatology specialists to our community, making it more convenient for patients with complex conditions to receive expert care."

Patients experiencing persistent joint pain, swelling, stiffness or symptoms of autoimmune disease may benefit from evaluation by a rheumatology specialist. Referrals can be made by a primary care provider or another specialist. For more information, please call 304-927-6822.

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

1) Opinion Editorials (Op-Eds) and Letters to the Editor may contain constructive criticisms, thoughts, and observations based on reliable information. Each submission is reviewed and accepted on an individual basis.

2) Discourse should be generally respectful, without profanity, rooted in fact, professionally presented (satire is acceptable), and written by the person submitting. All submissions are subject to revision concerning writing me-

chanics, space available, and accuracy.

3) Editorial staff reserves the right to contact others concerning the subject matter to balance the presentation of the issue and/or concern.

3) Phone numbers must be included to facilitate editorial questions and fact-checking processes.

Editorials, letters to the editor, press releases, meeting notices, and announcements can be sent to contact@calhounchronicle.com.

MILESTONES

clear before putting the project out to bid. That process just started. “I can’t remember the last project that was put out to bid and got completed,” he noted in the meeting when announcing that the Norman Ridge project could move forward in the most recent meeting of the Calhoun County Commission.

Additionally, Calhoun County also received a Preliminary Engineering Report for the Upper West Fork Water Extension that will connect Calhoun and Clay County’s water systems. That will serve as the first project to connect a Calhoun PSD with an outside entity. Lupardus explained that will provide redundancy in case of problems with the Town of Grantsville system or other potential issues such as emergency contamination of the water source. “We should be touching the other systems,” noted Lupardus, “then backfeed to them or them to us” if needed.

After a meeting between local officials, all three water service providers in Calhoun and over 30 others involved at the state, local, and private sector levels, Lupardus stated that “everyone is in agreement”

The Anamoriah/Route 5 water project also received a preliminary engineering report. Lupardus stated in the Commission meeting that “we’re starting to apply the pressure to get that moving forward as well. There’s no reason we can’t do multiple water projects at the same time.”

He added that Speaker Hanshaw and the county’s state senators have remained strongly supportive, Hanshaw saying “let’s get this water going!”

With the State of West Virginia and the Public Service Commission both encouraging consolidation as part of upgrading local water systems, Lupardus shared that consolidation of Calhoun County’s PSDs represents a desired goal.

Lupardus also recently issued a communication to the Mount Zion PSD Board regarding expressed citizen concerns over a list of numerous violation notices in 2025 and 2026 provided to the County Commission by a resident. He posed a series of

SHORTAGE

vision’s great fictional defense attorneys, such as Ben Matlock or Perry Mason. Sam Waterston’s Jack McCoy on “Law and Order” provided an image of a principled district attorney navigating through the practicalities and ethics of criminal prosecutions. “Night Court” showed some of the absurdity that takes place in criminal courts, but never forgot that the law has a heart as well.

Most law, however, never takes place in a courtroom. Lawyers create contracts for businesses and individuals, prepare deeds and wills, litigate divorces, fight or help to enforce government agency regulations, and do a great deal of the “grunt work” in business and government.

Fewer attorneys willing and able to work in these less glamorous areas of law in less glamorous geographic areas mean that the business of small communities sometimes depends on the tight schedules of what few attorneys remain in practice in these areas. The American Law Association refers to such localities with less than one lawyer per 1,000 residents as “legal deserts.” In West Virginia in 2024, 48 of 55 counties qualify as such.

Six of the seven counties listed not considered legal deserts have sizable urban populations. Pendleton in 2024 was the seventh because of its sparse population, but one of its career attorneys retired this year, pushing the county into “legal desert” status.

With national legal organizations calling the issue a “justice gap crisis,” the West Virginia State Supreme Court of Appeals “authorized the creation of the Commission on the Future of the Practice of Law in West Virginia on April 15, 2025.” According to the published study, “The Court appointed Administrative Director

Continued from Page 1

question to the Board, including if the PSD will “be applying for a line replacement project for the Millstone area to address the frequent leaks.” Additionally, he asked about plans to repair the leak at the “Y” intersection in Arnoldsburg and PSD plans to address violations “publicly.”

Lupardus in response to a resident stated that “we need to push and start that project” at Millstone and “I believe all commissioners are in full support” of that. He explained that much of the line in that area lies directly on bedrock, which creates maintenance issues. We just need to find the engineering specs from the original line to see how long that is,” Lupardus added.

Additionally, a member of the Mount Zion PSD Board tendered a resignation. In the most recent County Commission meeting, Lupardus called for anyone who has interest to submit a request to join the Board.

In the same meeting, in response to expressed concerns about the “countywide water situation (seeming to be) destabilizing, Lupardus shared that the “PSDs are interested in consolidation” and that a move has been made with the Public Service Commission to dissolve the operations and management agreement established prior to the current Commission.

Commissioner Craig Arthur agreed, saying “on behalf of the citizens, the only way is to move forward with our water systems in the county is to merge our resources together between the two PSDs and if we need to look at additional funding . . . that’s the route we’re going to go.” He added that the combined system would benefit from an overall manager who had expertise in the science and operational aspects of public water.

“Unfortunately until the O and M is dissolved by the PSC, they are in an active agreement,” said Lupardus in the Commission meeting. That active agreement remains a potential barrier to progress on consolidation. “The current O and M needs to be handled by the PSC as quickly as possible,” he said.

Continued from Page 1

Keith Hoover to serve as Chair, and appointed representatives of the West Virginia State Bar, West Virginia University College of Law, West Virginia Legislature, current circuit and family court judges, and a federal Magistrate to serve as Commissioners.”

It commenced work almost a year ago on August 18. The Commission did not start from scratch, but in the course of research also asked field related stakeholders to provide analysis and opinion on recommendations made by The Committee on Legal Education and Admissions Reform (“CLEAR”). This slate of proposed reforms includes “innovative pathways to licensure”, accepting alternative pathways to licensure approved in other states, communicating the need for and prestige of public defense lawyers while also striving to lower case-loads and support “lawyer well-being”, encourage conversations about financial aid and debt for school, and also working on ways to connect rural residents with legal education and early career opportunities.

In each case, CLEAR urged state supreme courts to assume a leadership role, which the WVSSA has done.

West Virginia between 2014 and 2024 lost about 10 percent of its practicing lawyers, from 4,873 to 4,420. Of those, only 2,221 work in private practice. West Virginia University Law School saw applications and graduations from the program decline in the same period as well. During the same period of time, the state itself lost a little less than five percent of its population. About one-fourth of lawyers in the Mountain State, as of 2024, planned to retire between then and 2029.

Loss in population, however, does not correlate to a decrease in certain high-intensity cases. For example, the Commission reported that “in 2014 West Virginia courts handled 4,005 child abuse and neglect cases, while in 2024 the courts saw 5,472 such filings.”

Pendleton County-based attorney Isaac Sponaugle, also a former West Virginia House of Delegates Minority Leader, shared that “child abuse and neglect cases, which require the court to appoint counsel, have increased by more than 36 percent in the last decade.”

Additionally, attorneys who accept court-appointed defense assignments represent a relatively small minority of lawyers. A little less than one-third accept these assignments while 44 percent have done so in the past, but stated they probably would not do so again. Almost 25 percent stated they never have accepted court-appointed defense work. Fewer attorneys willing to accept these assignments translates to increasing difficulty in scheduling dockets, particularly when individual lawyers work in multiple circuits.

Findings came from a survey that issued 2,177 questionnaires to West Virginia lawyers with a response rate of approximately 25 percent.

LAWYERS

Cont. from Page 1

schools, plus one at Ohio University that allows tuition reciprocity with West Virginia and that the state works to keep doctors and other medical practitioners home.

His own son is set to graduate from Appalachian Law School in Grundy, Virginia, whose mission lies in educating lawyers to serve rural and underserved communities. “A lot of them are coming back to Appalachia to practice.” Harris says that WVU College of Law needs to strike a balance between the desire for higher national rankings and its primary role as one of the state’s land grant universities to serve the people of West Virginia first.

Because individual practices and smaller firms tend to accept more court-appointed work, “the Commission recommends creating targeted opportunities for new or recent law school graduates to open small firms in rural areas.” About 40 percent of individual practices and 25 percent of smaller firms will accept child abuse and neglect related court appointments.

Also, all too often, younger attorneys do not grasp the allure of small-town law practice with its much lower cost of living and ease of building networks while providing a superior environment in which to raise a family. A little over eight percent of younger lawyers practice in counties with smaller and more sparse populations.

The Commission calls upon the WVU School of Law and other statewide legal resources to create structures that encourage the creation of small town practices. This would include an “incubator” structure as well as mentorship for the early years of professional development. Only 14 percent of solo practicing state lawyers report having had this advantage.

Low interest loans for starting a practice, as well as student loan forgiveness for rural practice would create more incentives. Student loan forgiveness for teachers to work in underserved areas, for instance, have helped to bring some, if not enough, professionals in that field to these areas.

Also similar to what the field of teacher education has pioneered, the Commission encourages the establishment of alternative pathways to enter the legal profession in addition to the traditional degree track.

The Commission does outline possible expansions of WVU Law School into more remote and online learning, the Commission also recognizes the limitations of resources to the flagship university at the present time. Harris suggests also that a certain percentage of law school spots be set aside for West Virginians because a lot of current students “have never been to West Virginia, study for three years, graduate, and go back home.”

What the Commission did not recommend was a program to promote rural law practice. It analyzed the statistics of where young lawyers practice and assumed that incentives provided the main means of attracting lawyers to smaller communities, especially in a time when younger generations seek more from a career than simply a solid paycheck.

“It used to be that we had local attorneys, people knew them, trusted them, they were part of the community,” noted Lupardus. Harris added that towns such as Grantsville, Elizabeth, and Ravenswood have traditionally enjoyed the services of hometown “small firms that did really important work.”

“I have never once regretted the decision to practice law where I’m from, “ noted Sponaugle. He explained that the sense of connection to clients brings more to the job, saying “my clients are not file numbers. They are people I will see at the store on Saturday. Your clients are your neighbors and the problems you help solve are their problems.”

Additionally, attorneys have more opportunity in smaller communities. “In a small town,” said Sponaugle “a young attorney does not have to wait 10 years to get into the courtroom or handle a case that truly matters.” One gets thrown in quickly to try cases, “handle land transactions, and probating estates.”

While specializing is tough in a smaller community, one can enjoy the fact that “no two weeks are alike” with the broad variety of cases to engage. “You never stop learning,” he added.

“The report makes clear that the demand is there. What we need now are young people to answer it,” he concluded.



Bath Remodel

Safety. Style. Stress-Free Installation.

CALL NOW 1.866.465.3017

SPECIAL OFFER

Waiving All Installation Costs!

Add'l terms apply. Offer subject to change and vary by dealer. Expires 12/27/26.



GENERAC

#1 standby generator worldwide.

Get whole-home power, automatically.

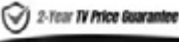
Call 844-901-2301 to schedule your free quote today!

*Terms & conditions apply





Authorized Retailer



Celebrate

AMERICA'S 250th ANNIVERSARY

WITH DISH & SAVE BIG!

\$250 OFF

YOUR DISH SERVICE

THE LOWEST PRICE IN SATELLITE TV JUST GOT EVEN BETTER

Switch to DISH for just \$109.99/mo \$99.99/mo Includes 240+ Family Favorite Channels

USE OFFER CODE

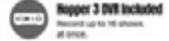
DISH250

2-YEAR TV PRICE GUARANTEE



Premium Movies On Demand

FREE Premium Movie Channels for 3 months



Hopper 3 DVR Included

Record up to 16 shows at once



Free Professional Installation

\$100 Value



CALL TODAY!

OFFER ENDS SEPTEMBER 6, 2026

1-855-736-4350

UP TO \$300

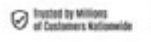
2-YEAR TV PRICE GUARANTEE

WHEN YOU SWITCH TO DISH

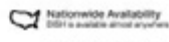


\$300

Light Dish, Dish, Dish



Trusted by Millions of Customers Nationwide



Nationwide Availability

DISH is available in most areas



Signal Reliability Guarantee

Your signal is ready for any tomorrow

Call for full offer details.

Work continuing on Calhoun Chronicle Church Directory

EDITOR’S NOTE: We are still working toward creating a Church Directory for the Calhoun Chronicle and these are the churches we have thus far. We would like for you to look over the churches we have information about and correct anything we may have wrong in the church’s summary.

Also, if we missed any churches in the county, please let us know and tell us about your church. We look forward to hearing from you because each and every church is very important. Also, we would like to get information on churches in neighboring counties where Calhoun people may attend such as churches in Smithville, Stumptown and Creston. We look forward to hearing from you.

APOSTOLIC

None listed

BAPTIST

The Church at Annamoriah

PASTOR DR. BARRY A. MILLER
SS @ 10:00 & Worship @ 11:00 Located about 1/2 of a mile out Katie’s run road Annamoriah, West Virginia



BETHLEHEM BAPTIST CHURCH

Sunday School 10 a.m. – Worship 11 a.m.
Pastor: Tom Law
Route 5 East Little Kanawha Highway, Grantsville, WV



Brooksville Church Missionary Baptist

Pastor Matt Sanders, Sunday School – 10 a.m., Worship 11 a.m.,
Wednesday Bible Study 6:30 PM (Adult & Youth Programs). Phone 304-354-6967 The Perfect Church for Those Who Aren’t! Find us on Facebook! Brooksville Missionary Baptist Church

Chapel Baptist

1710 Nobe Rd Big Springs, WV, 26137, Pastors Harold Francis and Tom Law, Sunday and Wednesday Services 6 P.M. beginning in November.
(304) 354-6080 <https://www.chapelbaptist.org>

Enon Baptist Church

Russett Road Grantsville, WV 26147 Pastor John Vannoy

First Baptist Church of Grantsville

Associate Pastor Rick Godfrey
Sunday: 10:00 – Sunday school 11:00 – morning worship
Wednesday: 7:00 – Bible study
Pastor Ron’s cell: +1 (304) 786-6273 Home: (304) 477-3339

Freedom Baptist Church

Chloe, WV, Campus Pastor Steve Boggs. Open at 10am Preaching at 10:30 am Call 304-655-7692 for information: Internet services Done by Pastor (Mike Worf) at Freedom Baptist Church of Okeechobee Florida Sunday morning 10:30am, Sunday night 8pm, Wednesday night 7pm and Friday night 8pm



Prosperity Baptist Church
844 Leading Creek Rd.
Big Springs, WV 26137

VICTORY BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Steven Carter, Sunday School – 10 a.m., Worship 11 a.m., Sunday Evening – 6 p.m., Wednesday Bible Study 7 p.m. (Adult & Youth Programs).



Phone 304-354-7780, Find us on Facebook!

CATHOLIC



Good Shepherd Catholic Church

701 Mineral Road, Glenville, WV.
Pastor: Father Gary Naegele, Mass schedule: Sun. 11:00 a.m. Daily Mass and Holy Day as announced in bulletin; Confessions: before Sunday Mass.



Holy Redeemer

602 Parkersburg Rd. Spencer
(304) 927-2013
holyredeemerwv@gmail.com



St. Elizabeth of Hungary

St Rt 14 S, Elizabeth
(681) 236-2700
stelizofhungary@gmail.com
CHURCH OF CHRIST



Steer Creek Church of Christ 3466 Rosedale Road Stumptown, WV 25267 Sunday Morning Bible Study/ Sunday School 10:00 a.m. Worship 10:30 a.m.

INDEPENDENT



PLEASANT HILL CHURCH

Pastor, Rick Matheney
3757 N. Calhoun Highway, Grantsville, WV 26147.
Full Gospel Lighthouse Church
Big Bend, WV Pastor: Mike Doherty Phone: 304.916.4668 Sunday Morning: 10:00 am Sunday

Evening: 6:30 pm Wednesday Evening: 7:00 pm
METHODIST



ALBERT’S CHAPEL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Sunday School 10:00 am, Worship 11:00 am
Mt Zion United Methodist Church



Worship 10:00 am, 304-514-1346

Prudence Chapel



CLOSED

Walker Church

CLOSED

Orma United Methodist

CLOSED

Knotts Memorial Church

Pastor Tim Davis Sunday Worship: 9 am Sunday School: 10 am Wednesday Bible Study: 6 pm Thursday Men’s/Women’s groups: 6 pm Congregation Led Services <https://www.KnottsChurch.com>



NON DENOMINATIONAL

Cornerstone Praise and Worship 527 Highland Street, Grantsville, WV. Pastor: Kevin Church Sunday School 10:00 am, Worship 11:00 am, Sunday Evening Prayer Group 6:00 pm Wednesday Bible Study 6pm (adults and youth). Find us on Facebook!

Walnut Grove Community Church

6030 Barnes Run Rd
Arnoldsburg, WV 25234
Pastor Clark Samples
Sunday 10 AM & 6 PM
Thursday 7 PM
Updates are posted on our Facebook page, Walnut Grove Community Church





**Double
YOUR IMPACT**
*with Print
& Online*
ADVERTISING!

You may redeem at any time before December 31, 2026, by paying the above total less any unearned interest. *If the above real estate is your primary residence, you may petition the Auditor to redeem the real estate in not more than three incremental payments that equal the total amount required to redeem the real estate prior to the issuance of the deed described above.*

Given under my hand July 30, 2026

Christal G. Perry

Christal G. Perry
Deputy Commissioner of Delinquent and
Nonentered Lands of CALHOUN County, State of West Virginia

**Please return this letter and payment to the
West Virginia State Auditor's Office, County Collections
Division 1900 Kanawha Boulevard East
Building 1, Room W-114
Charleston, West Virginia 25305
Questions please call 1-888-509-6568**

Executive Secretary, Public Service Commission of West Virginia, P.O. Box 812, Charleston, WV 25322. Protests may be filed online through the Commission website using the “Submit a Comment” link or may be mailed to the Executive Secretary, Public Service Commission of West Virginia, P.O. Box 812, Charleston, WV 25323.

you may redeem at any time before December 31, 2026, by paying the above total less any unearned interest. *the above real estate is your primary residence, you may petition the Auditor to redeem the real estate not more than three incremental payments that equal the total amount required to redeem the real estate prior to the issuance of the deed described above.*

Given under my hand July 30, 2026

Christal G. Perry
Christal G. Perry
Deputy Commissioner of Delinquent and
Nonentered Lands of CALHOUN County, State of West Virginia

**Please return this letter and payment to the
West Virginia State Auditor's Office, County Collections
Division 1900 Kanawha Boulevard East
Building 1, Room W-114
Charleston, West Virginia 25305
Questions please call 1-888-509-6568**

You may redeem at any time before December 31, 2026, by paying the above total less any unearned interest. *the above real estate is your primary residence, you may petition the Auditor to redeem the real estate not more than three incremental payments that equal the total amount required to redeem the real estate prior to the issuance of the deed described above.*

Given under my hand July 30, 2026

Christal G. Perry
Christal G. Perry
Deputy Commissioner of Delinquent and
Nonentered Lands of CALHOUN County, State of West Virginia

**Please return this letter and payment to the
West Virginia State Auditor's Office, County Collections
Division 1900 Kanawha Boulevard East
Building 1, Room W-114
Charleston, West Virginia 25305
Questions please call 1-888-509-6568**

may redeem at any time before December 31, 2026, by paying the above total less any unearned interest.
the above real estate is your primary residence, you may petition the Auditor to redeem the real estate
not more than three incremental payments that equal the total amount required to redeem the real
estate prior to the issuance of the deed described above.

Given under my hand July 30, 2026

Christal G. Perry
Christal G. Perry
Deputy Commissioner of Delinquent and
Nonentered Lands of CALHOUN County, State of West Virginia

**Please return this letter and payment to the
West Virginia State Auditor's Office, County Collections
Division 1900 Kanawha Boulevard East
Building 1, Room W-114
Charleston, West Virginia 25305
Questions please call 1-888-509-6568**

Agricultural sampling shows low-level findings as agencies continue Parkersburg fire cleanup

Charleston, W.Va. —The West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection (WVDEP) continues to coordinate with Peoples Cartage and other state and federal agencies as cleanup and remediation continue at the Camden Avenue site. WVDEP has issued an enforcement order requiring Peoples Cartage to develop and implement plans for site cleanup, characterization, and waste disposal; maintain stormwater controls to prevent runoff from affecting nearby waters; and conduct ongoing sampling. Both WVDEP and Peoples Cartage are analyzing samples for more than 90 parameters commonly evaluated following structure fires and associated with building materials, plastics, resins, and combustion. Results received

to date have not identified concentrations warranting additional response or protective measures beyond the ongoing cleanup, monitoring, and remediation. The West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA) also collected approximately 200 water and soil samples from agricultural and residential properties where sampling was requested. Those samples were analyzed by U.S. EPA Region 3's Mobile Lab for parameters commonly associated with combustion, smoke, ash, and fire debris and by the WVDA for heavy metals. None of the compounds analyzed were detected in the residential water samples reported to date, while low concentrations of some compounds were detected in soil samples.

These compounds can come from many combustion sources, including wood burning, vehicle emissions, wildfires, and other fires. The results were evaluated against applicable state “de minimus” screening levels. While some were above state levels, samples did not exceed federal action levels. No additional response or protective measures are required at this time. WVDA also collected samples of produce, vegetation, and honey and partnered with a third-party laboratory to test for semi-volatile compounds. Residual concentrations of some contaminants were detected in certain samples, but at levels well below those considered a health concern.

Among the compounds evaluated were polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), which can be produced when materials such as wood, fuel, plastics and other organic matter are burned. Because PAHs can result from a variety of combustion sources, they are routinely evaluated following fires. More information is available in the Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs) Fact Sheet. Water and soil sample results and other sampling and resource information can be found at: <https://agriculture.wv.gov/parkersburg-fire-agricultural-sampling-information/>. For additional questions or concerns about agricultural sampling, contact the WVDA at 304-558-3200.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR LITTLE KANAWHA AREA DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION WITH OFFICES IN GRANTSVILLE, CALHOUN COUNTY, WV AND ELIZABETH, WIRT COUNTY, WV

Little Kanawha Area Development Corporation (LKADC) is a public nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation and the lead economic and community development organization for Calhoun and Wirt Counties, WV. LKADC's mission is to improve the welfare of county residents by promoting and supporting responsible business and industry recruitment, startup, growth, and prosperity, while lever-aging available resources to advance economic development in both counties. The successful candidate will report to a board of directors appointed by the Calhoun County and Wirt County Com-missions.

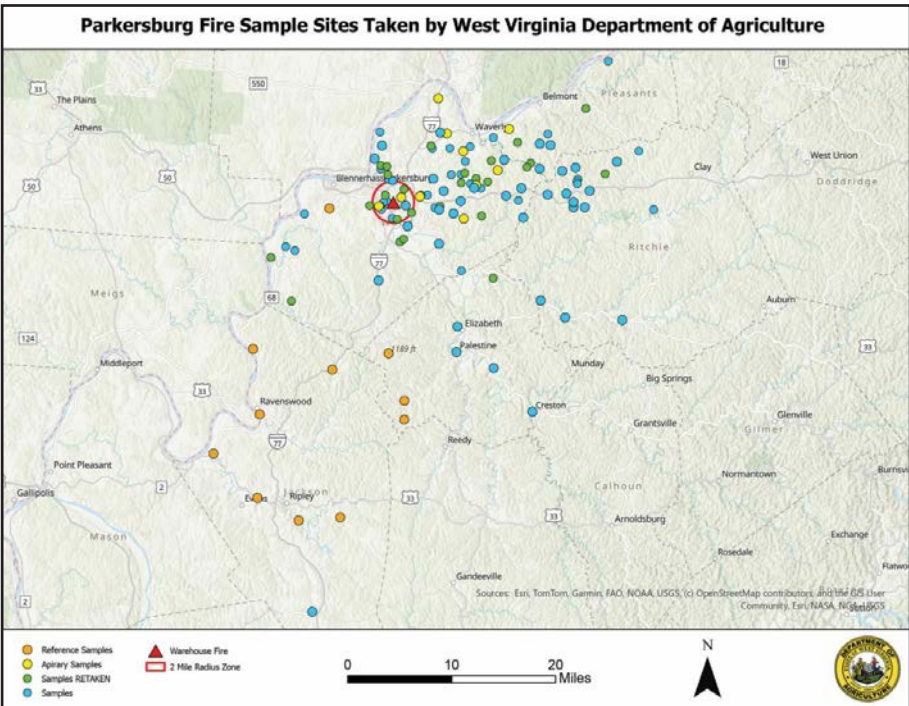
The successful applicant will be expected to function independently of daily super-vision and will set the tone and agenda of the organization, subject to input and ap-proval by the LKADC Board of Directors.

- PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS AND SKILLS INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO:**
- BA or MA in public administration, business management, marketing, or a relat-ed field.
 - Experience in economic and community development activities at the local and state level.
 - Familiarity with public support services for business and industry.
 - Understanding of financial management, financial reporting and record keeping.
 - CEDC or PCED credential a plus. Willingness to pursue such certification(s).
 - Grant writing experience preferred.
 - Skill in written and oral communication.
 - Skill in computer applications, including Microsoft and Quickbooks program-ming.
 - Willingness to serve as LKADC representative with various regional and state devel-opment organizations.
 - Some area and state travel are required.

Starting Annual Salary: \$50,000, plus benefits.

PLEASE SUBMIT LETTER OF INTEREST AND RESUME TO:

Shelia Burch, Executive Director
Little Kanawha Area Dev Corp
PO Box 508
Elizabeth, WV 26143
Email to: sburch@littlekanawha.com



UHC welcomes Dipanjan Debnath, MD to UHC Oncology

Dipanjan Debnath, MD, is joining Zee-shan Ahmad, MD; Paul M. Brager, MD; Salman S. Osman, MD; and Ather Syed, MD, at UHC Oncology, coming from Al-legheny Health Network Cancer Institute in Pittsburgh, Pa. Dr. Debnath's educational journey be-gan with a Bachelor of Medicine and Sur-gery (MBBS) from the Armed Forces Medical College, Pune, India. He went on to his residency in Inter-nal Medicine at MedStar Georgetown University Washington Hospital Center, Washington, DC. His fellowship at AHN Cancer Institute was in hematology and oncology. His area of interest includes plasma cell disorders, lymphoid malig-nancies and breast cancer.



Dipanjan Debnath, MD, UHC Oncology
United Hospital Center (UHC) is the re-sult of a merger between St. Mary's and Union Protestant hospitals in 1970. This bold move provides North Central West Virginia with a regional community hos-pital that offers a vast array of services. The new UHC opened in 2010 and is located along I-79 in Bridgeport. The 736,403 square foot structure rises eight stories. It is designed around the environ-ment with patients, family, employees, and community in mind, which includes enhanced patient privacy, a high level of technological integration, and improved access to care. The acute care facility has 292 private inpatient rooms and a medical staff that consists of more than 366 phy-sicians, advanced practice providers, and allied health professionals. UHC has more than 2,613 employees and is a member of WVU Medicine (West Virginia United Health System). For more information about UHC, please visit uhcwv.org.

THE HEARTBEAT OF OUR Community.

LOCAL STORIES.
LOCAL PEOPLE.
LOCAL CONNECTIONS.

More Than Just Paper and Ink.
We don't just report the news; we live it alongside you. By sharing local stories told by local people, we create the local connections that turn a zip code into a home. When you read The Calhoun Chronicle, you aren't just staying informed—you're keeping our community's heart beating strong.



In print and online, your community's stories live here.

KEEP IT LOCAL

Your trusted source for local news in print, online and on the go!

The Calhoun Chronicle

P.O. Box 400
Grantsville, WV 26147
contact@calhouncronicle.com