

Warren/Frederick County Report

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Recipe: Banana and Pecan Granola Bowl with Caramelized Bananas

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INDICTMENTS

“The Road That Made America”

Author James Dodson takes a modern pilgrim’s journey on the “Great Wagon Road”



The Virginia state Carolina Road Historic Marker on the Great Wagon Road is on the route which passed through present-day Franklin County, Virginia. CC BY-SA 3.0 Courtesy Marmaduke Percy - Own work

By Carol Ballard
Warren/Frederick County Report

Imagine several centuries ago, fac-

Warren/Frederick County Report

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ing a journey hopefully, intrepidly, and bravely working toward the promise of an unknown, but new way of life.

“More than 100,000 settlers who took the ‘Great Waggon Road,’ as it was called, were on the primary road of frontier America: a mass migration route that stretched more than 800 miles from Philadelphia to Augusta, Georgia and made by those who would become the foundational generations of the world’s first true immigrant nation,” according to historians.

Author James Dodson’s newly (three weeks old) released book “The Road That Made America - A modern pilgrim’s journey on the Great Wagon Road, includes facts and information

from the stories of many of these.

“Drawing on years of fieldwork and scholarship by an army of archeologists, academics, archivists, preservationists, and passionate history lovers, James Dodson sets out to follow the road’s original path ...On his journey, he crosses six contiguous states and some of the most historic and hallowed landscapes of eastern America, touching many of the nation’s most sacred battlefields and burying grounds” states the book’s overview.

But he found many of their descendants and other present-day characters along the way and came to an enlightening realization after talking to the amazing number of people he met.

“The real story are the people who are the keepers of the story of the Great Wagon Road,” he said in a recent phone interview.

His ancestors on both sides traveled the Great Wagon Road to Maryland and North Carolina, which gave him a personal stake in uncovering the road’s legacy, and he took the opportunity to weave his family’s stories into the narrative.

In one story he credits his veteran newspaperman father’s influence in lighting the spark that brought this book to fruition.

“My father’s enthusiasm for outdoor life was rivaled only by his passion for American history,” he began.

“How can you possibly know where you’re going if you never learn where you came from?” his father asked James and his brother Dick.

Family vacations and camping trips



The map of The Great Valley Road used by settlers in the 1700s America shows its starting point in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania then to Roanoke, Virginia, splitting, with one fork leading to Knoxville, Tennessee, and the other to Augusta, Georgia. Public Domain CC0

had always involved some form of investigation of local history or folklore.




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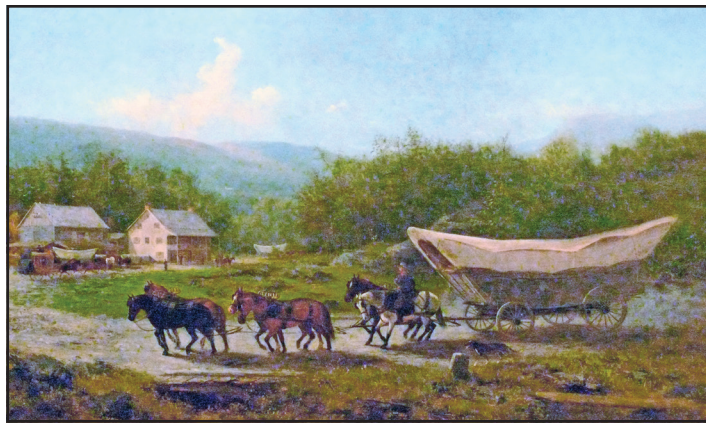


Warren County resident, The Reverend Larry Johnson, a.k.a. "Liberty Man," is featured in the book and is described by Dodson as "Dressed in the green woodland hunting frock and tricorn hat of a southern colonial militia man."

"Civilization has a way of covering up the past, leaving nature to reclaim whatever is no longer of use. I'm sure you could find traces of that old road if you knew where to look and took the time to seek it."

As we climbed back up the bank, I asked if we could someday go searching for the Great Wagon Road. My father smiled.

"How about this, sport. Someday I'll give you the keys to the Roadmaster



Settlers made their way down the Great Road in these Conestoga wagons. The painting is found in the State Museum of Pennsylvania by Newbold Hough Trotter (1827-1898). Photo by Ad Meskens-Own work- Public Domain

and you can go find it yourself."

"To this day I have no idea whether he was joking or planting a seed in my head. Whichever it was, I never forgot..." Dodson recalled.

Later, Dodson's wife Wendy, would add her thoughts to the idea by saying, "I do believe I hear that old wagon road calling your name."

The subsequent journey and writing were completed over six years later.

"I thought it would only take three weeks to go 800 miles and realized in the first three weeks that there was a lot more to do," he observed.

"This book does not purport to be a definitive history of the Great Wagon Road, rather a portrait of the old road as seen through the eyes of the remarkable people keeping its rich legacy and stories alive. I call them the flame keepers of the road that made America."

Dodson says he believes Virginia is the heart of the great Road (even though some Pennsylvanians would dispute that!) After starting off in Philadelphia encountering Rick Bravo, a Ben Franklin "interpreter," and other fascinating folks, he makes his way south. And when asked to high-

light some of the events on his journey, Dodson acknowledged that he especially likes York history (to learn more about this, read the book!) but since this article is in one of the local Shenandoah Valley newspapers, the focus is on local folks who have made history and still are doing so.

He said he especially enjoyed the part of the journey from Winchester to Roanoke. Of particular interest to local folks will be his experiences in Winchester, and again, so much more information is covered in the book!

He talked about meeting local "Liberty Man," Reverend Larry Johnson at Winchester's Museum of the Shenandoah.

The following is the quote from the book describing this scene.

"It was very surprising to see a man who looked like he stepped out of the Revolutionary War times!" he said. "As I approach, he (Reverend Larry Wilson Johnson, an 80-year-old resident of the nearby Warren County and retired Bishop of the Anglican Church) remains as still as a statue, evidently lost in thought, and I say, "You look like a fellow waiting for the Revolution to begin."

He glances up with a half-smile and says, "I hear that quite often, friend."

Then Johnson explains he is waiting to meet a school group set to arrive for one of his presentations and says,

See HISTORY, 4

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HISTORY, from 3

"I tell the story of "Liberty Man" Abel Johnson, who was my fourth great grandfather and a true American patriot during the American Revolution." Continuing with the narrative, Dodson says, "Over the next 20 minutes the story he spins is the kind of lovely surprise I'm beginning to realize is commonplace along the Great Wagon Road. Best of all it involves my own home state of North Carolina. What results is a short history of Johnson's forefather Abel Johnson as the militia horseman fighting in several key engagements across the Cape Fear region and southern theater under the command of general Nathaniel Greene and Daniel Morgan." When Dodson noted that they followed the Great Wagon Road to

Guildford courthouse Liberty Man looks surprised and asked him about his interest in the Road. Then they realized that part of his family also came down to North Carolina. Dodson is from Greensboro, North Carolina and Reverend Johnson has roots not far from there. "We're both Tarheels!" Johnson said recently Johnson told how he became Abel Johnston and created a program about the history of the Revolutionary War and our fight for freedom. "Quite frankly I had no idea if anyone today would even be interested, he said. "I just knew it was something I had to do and fortunately it caught on." Johnson says he believes young and old audiences are so drawn to Liberty Man because his is a timeless story

and one that every American can relate to one way or another. "Each of us wants to know where we came from. In our earliest days America was a rootless society, always on the move and the very reason for the Wagon Road you're traveling! He continued. "Human beings need roots to achieve a true sense of their identity, and I think there is a yearning for that identity among all Americans these days. The world is so unsettled, and this country is so bitterly divided, I think my presentations simply educate and maybe even inspire tolerance in folks once they know that most of us came from someplace else to find new life and liberty in the American wilderness." In the 1800s, Dodson's ancestors came from Virginia down to North Carolina, and when he was told as a teen some of the history, learning that many were from England, Scotland and Germany, he was taken by surprise "My father thought knowing our heritage was very important, which is really the story of America," he re-

members. He also said that after writing the book, he has been speaking and signing books on four sellout evenings about his book full of people who have so many of these ancestors. With the memories of his father's attitude of keeping history alive, at the same time, he included them in then-present-day events. He took his sons to witness on day two the famous "sit in" by the four African American students from North Carolina A&T

University who attempted to non-violently integrate the Whites Only Woolworth's lunch counter in Greensboro on February 2, 1960. "This would become broadly cited as a defining moment in the birth of the nonviolent Civil Rights Movement in America and was my seventh birthday," said Dodson. This thread of consciousness ran through his pilgrimage. At Belle Grove Historic Plantation in Middletown, Virginia, he spoke



Upcoming events with Dan McDermott

- Fri. July 25, 2025 (7:30-11:30pm) Music Bingo/Karaoke-New Market Eagles*
- Sat. July 26, 2025 (7:00-10:30pm) Karaoke/Music Bingo-Woodstock Moose*
- Mon. July 28, 2025 (6pm) Kids Karaoke at Warren County Fair warrencountyfair.com
- Wed. July 30, 2025 (7pm) Warren County Fair Karaoke Contest warrencountyfair.com
- Sat. Aug 2, 2025 (6-10pm) Music Bingo & Karaoke at Shenandoah Valley Axe Throwing Company **OPEN TO THE PUBLIC:** 20 South St. Front Royal
- Wed. Aug 6, 2025 (6-9pm) Trivia & Music Bingo at Shenandoah Valley Axe Throwing Company **OPEN TO THE PUBLIC:** 20 South St. Front Royal, VA
- Thurs. Aug 7, 2025 (6:30-8:30pm) Music Bingo at Winchester, Va. Elks*
- Sat. Aug 9, 2025 (6-10pm) Music Bingo & Karaoke at Shenandoah Valley Axe Throwing Company **OPEN TO THE PUBLIC:** 20 South St. Front Royal
- Wed. Aug 13, 2025 (6-9pm) Trivia & Music Bingo at Shenandoah Valley Axe Throwing Company **OPEN TO THE PUBLIC:** 20 South St. Front Royal, VA
- Thurs. Aug 14, 2025 (6-8pm) Karaoke & Music Bingo at Good Lions Lodge* - 413-H South Street (Royal Plaza across from Fitness Evolution) thegoodlions.org
- Sat. Aug 16, 2025 (6-10pm) Music Bingo & Karaoke at Shenandoah Valley Axe Throwing Company **OPEN TO THE PUBLIC:** 20 South St. Front Royal
- Wed. Aug 20, 2025 (6-9pm) Trivia & Music Bingo at Shenandoah Valley Axe Throwing Company **OPEN TO THE PUBLIC:** 20 South St. Front Royal, VA

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to Executive Director and historian Kristen Laise about its history and the Cedar Creek Battleground, then heard the story of the enslaved "Trail of Tears," a story that never made it into history books.

Laise told them about her encounter with the author Edward Ball who wrote the book *Slaves in the Family*, and where this story was told in detail.

Dodson continues saying that,

"With a little bit more research from a historian Laise discovered that historic US Hwy11 which runs right past Belle Grove property was obviously on the route of that "Trail of Tears."

He writes, "It was a 1,000-mile-long river of people reaching from Virginia to Louisiana during the 50 years before the Civil War, with about a million enslaved people [who were] moved from the upper South-Virginia Mary-

land and Kentucky-to the Deep South Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama."

"Ball's story recounts "men shackled to each other, followed by women and children who trekked through the heat and the dangers of this southern wilderness from the depleted Tobacco States to the Cotton States, a commercial boom fueled by the invention of the cotton gin and rise of "King Cotton."

Dodson said that Ball pointed out to Kristen that the prominent American historians knew about the infamous cof-fle trains (definition: Cof-fle: a line of animals or enslaved people fastened or driven along together) but owing to the scarcity of details, never attempted to write this story of slavery, so it never reached the pages of mainstream American history.

"A powerful line near the end of his stunning odyssey lodged itself permanently in my Southern head: "The past cannot be unremembered," Dodson recalled.

Dodson later remarked in the inter-

view that "Virginia is now in the forefront of opening enslaved history."

Also, not to be forgotten, according to historical research, long before white men arrived on the North American continent powerful indigenous tribes occupied the Shenandoah Valley called The Great Warriors Path following trails created by migrating buffalo herds.

Dodson concluded with this message.

"Even though only about one-third of the voices, historians as well as ordinary people, wound up in the account those who didn't make it onto the page will live forever in the memory and

field notes of this grateful traveler. Thanks to them what began simply as the fulfillment of a boyhood ambition became something far more personal in nature-A pilgrimage in a quest of upheld historical memory and identity that deepened my own understanding of how the past still shapes our lives today."

The Road That Made America: A Modern Pilgrim's Journey on the Great Wagon Road, can be found on Amazon, Barnes and Noble bookstores and is published by Simon and Schuster.

Visit

WarrenCountyVa.com

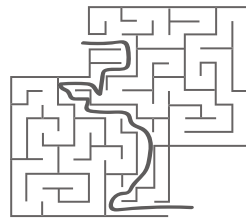
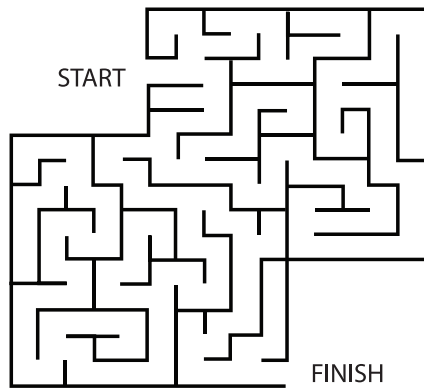


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1540: Henry VIII of England marries his fifth wife, Catherine Howard.

1854: The USS Constellation is commissioned.

1984: The summer Olympic Games open in Los Angeles.

NEW WORD

KELP
large brown algae or seaweeds

World FACT:

This beach in the U.S. Virgin Islands was ranked #1 on the list of the "World's 50 Best Beaches."

Answer: Trunk Bay

How they say that in...

English: Dolphin
Spanish: Delfin
Italian: Delfino
French: Dauphin
German: Delfin

Did You Know?

Beach umbrellas are handy to have while enjoying the beach. They provide shade that can protect people from the harsh rays of the sun.



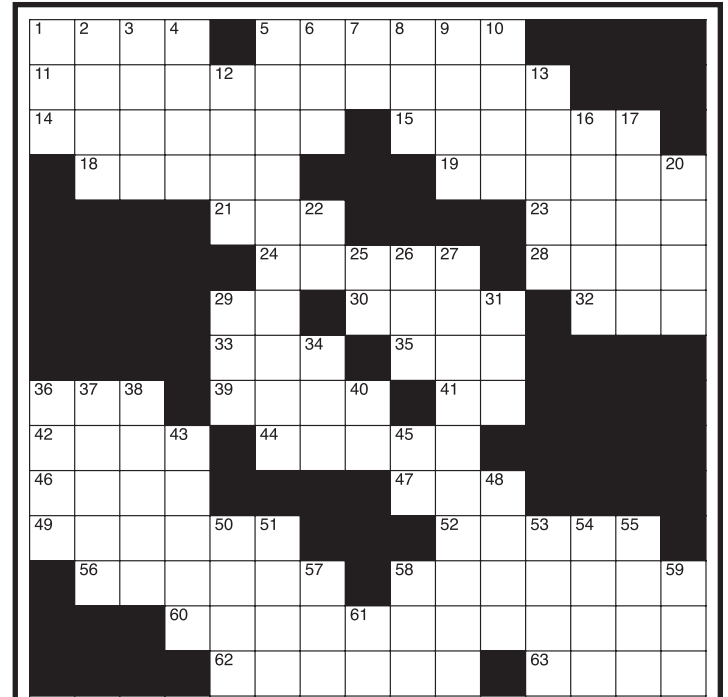
Answer: Starfish

Get the PICTURE?



Can you guess what the bigger picture is?

Answer: Starfish



CLUES ACROSS

1. Popular potato snack
5. Guards the Pyramids
11. Furnish anew
14. Herb
15. Preoccupy the mind continually
18. The lowest adult male singing voice
19. NATO commander (abbr.)
21. A major division of geological time
23. New Zealand parrot
24. Notions
28. Lump in yarn
29. Indicates position
30. Lose hold of
32. Hindu honorific
33. Former OSS
35. Electronic data processing
36. Cost per mile
39. Snake-like fish
41. They start the alphabet
42. Taylor Swift's tour
44. Intermediate ecological stage
46. Scarlett's home
47. Of he
49. Ohio city
52. Breakfast item
56. An evening party
58. ___ Falls
60. Linked together
62. Mythological spirits
63. Small Eurasian deer

CLUES DOWN

1. Earliest human form: ___-Magnon man
2. Flavoring
3. Notion

CLUES ACROSS

4. Bundy and Fenwick are two
5. Qualities of sound
6. One who gets paid
7. Expresses surprise
8. O.J. trial judge
9. Pointed ends of pens
10. Shield bugs genus
12. Container for shipping
13. Upper body parts
16. Closes tightly
17. Nigerian World Heritage Site
20. Volcanic island in Fiji
22. Commercial
25. - _ _ : denotes past
26. They _
27. Confraternities
29. A way to gain a point
31. Parts per billion (abbr.)
34. Brew
36. Badgers group
37. Sailing boat
38. ___ Polo, explorer
40. Elder citizen (abbr.)
43. Frankish law code
45. Exclamation of surprise
48. Groan
50. It presses clothing
51. Do not allow
53. Gelatinous substance
54. Common Japanese surname
55. Present in nature
57. Electronic countermeasures
58. Last or greatest in an indefinitely large series
59. Commercials
61. News agency



INDICTMENTS

2025 June Indictments April term

Roy Allen Cameron II

The Warren County Va. Circuit Court Grand Jury charges that: on or about January 15, 2025, in the County of Warren, Roy Allen Cameron, II, 41, of the 100 block of Lookout Pt. Way, Linden, VA 22642, did unlawfully and feloniously, knowingly, and intentionally possess a controlled substance listed in Schedule I or Schedule II of the Drug Control Act.

Damien Marquis Demers

The Warren County Va. Circuit Court Grand Jury charges that: on or

about March 15, 2025, in the County of Warren, Damien Marquis Demers, 25, of the 500 block of Yorktown Place, Winchester, VA 22601, did unlawfully and feloniously, having received a visible or audible signal from a law-enforcement officer to bring his/her motor vehicle to a stop, drive such motor vehicle in a willful or wanton disregard of such signal so as to interfere with or endanger the operation of the law-enforcement vehicle or endanger a person, and the speed of the accused exceeded the maximum allowed by twenty miles per hour.

Daryl Lee Funkhouser Jr.

The Warren County Va. Circuit

Court Grand Jury charges that: on or about April 13, 2025, in the County of Warren, Daryl Lee Funkhouser Jr., 35, of the 11000 block of Back Rd., Toms Brook, VA 22660, did unlawfully and feloniously wound, or by any means cause bodily injury to, Hunter Pierron,

with the intent to maim, disfigure, disable, or kill.

James Edward Henry

The Warren County Va. Circuit Court Grand Jury charges that: on or about December 21, 2024, in the County of Warren, James Edward Henry, 64, of the 1400 block of Blue Mtn., Rd., Front Royal, VA 22630, did unlawfully and feloniously, willfully and intentionally make a material false statement on a consent form required on a firearm transaction record as may be required by federal law in connection with the

purchase of a firearm.

David Mark Hoffman

The Warren County Va. Circuit Court Grand Jury charges David Mark Hoffman, 44, of the 1300 block of Massanutten Mtn. Dr., Front Royal, VA 22630, with two counts. COUNT ONE: In the County of Warren, David Mark Hoffman did unlawfully and feloniously commit an assault or an assault and battery against J. Gregory and A. Twyman, knowing or having reason to know that such persons were law enforcement officers engaged in the per-

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formance of their public duties. Date of the offenses was on or about November 15, 2024.

Emma Jade Nevaeh Kelley

The Warren County Va. Circuit Court Grand Jury charges Emma Jade Nevaeh Kelley, 19, of the 6000 block of Gospel St., Mt. Jackson, VA, 22842, with three counts. COUNTS ONE through THREE: In the County of Warren, Emma Jade Nevaeh Kelley did unlawfully and feloniously, knowingly and intentionally possess controlled substances listed in Schedule I or Schedule II of the Drug Control Act. Dates of the offenses were on or before November 4, 2024, January 20 and April 25, 2025.

Ronnie Lee Kennedy

The Warren County Va. Circuit Court Grand Jury charges that: on or about January 20, 2025, in the County of Warren, Ronnie Lee Kennedy, 47, of the 6600 block of Winchester Rd., Front Royal, VA 22630, did unlawfully and feloniously while being a prisoner in a state, local or community cor-

rectional facility or in the custody of an employee thereof, willfully tamper with, damage, destroy, or disable a fire protection or fire suppression system, equipment or sprinklers within a correctional facility.

Christopher James Leypoldt Jr.

On or about March 26, 2025, in the County of Warren, Christopher James Leypoldt Jr., 20, of the 300 block of Front St., Front Royal, VA 22630, did unlawfully and feloniously, while being a parent of, guardian for, or person responsible for the care of a child then under the age of eighteen years, commit a willful act or omission in the care of said child which was so gross, wanton, and culpable as to show a reckless disregard for human life.

Jessee William McGhee

The Warren County Va. Circuit Court Grand Jury charges Jessee William McGhee, age and address unavailable, with two counts. COUNT ONE: In the County of Warren, Jessee William McGhee did unlawfully and feloniously, knowingly and intention-

ally possess a controlled substance listed in Schedule I or Schedule II of the Drug Control Act. COUNT TWO: did, while being a prisoner in a state, local, or community correctional facility or in the custody of an employee thereof, did unlawfully and feloniously possess a chemical compound which the accused had not lawfully received. Date of the offenses was on or about December 13, 2024.

Jose Melara Alvarado

The Warren County Va. Circuit Court Grand Jury charges that: on or about March 5, 2025, in the County of Warren, Jose Melara Alvarado, age and address unavailable, did unlawfully and feloniously did drive a motor vehicle, or any self-propelled machinery or equipment, in such a manner as to

endanger the life, limb or property of another while his license to drive was revoked.

Maximino Mendoza Miranda Jr.

The Warren County Va. Circuit Court Grand Jury charges that: on or about March 26, 2025, in the County of Warren, Maximino Mendoza Miranda Jr., of the 300 block of W. 9th St., Front Royal, VA 22630, did unlawfully and feloniously, and maliciously wound or by any means cause bodily

injury to Aurelio Louis Lopez, with the intent to maim, disfigure, disable, or kill.

Tylar Alexa Dipatre


The Warren County Va. Circuit Court Grand Jury charges that: on or about December 30, 2024, in the County of Warren, Tylar Alexa Dipatre, 28, of the 100 block of Ulysses Way, Linden, VA 22642, did unlawfully and feloniously, knowingly, and intentionally possess a controlled substance listed in Schedule I or Schedule II of the Drug Control Act.

A Grand Jury Indictment is only a charge and not evidence of guilt. The defendants are entitled to a fair trial with the burden on the government to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.
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Weather forecast

Friday, July 25, 2025: A slight chance of showers and thunderstorms after 1pm. Sunny, with a high near 95. Heat index values as high as 102. West wind around 6 mph. Chance of precipitation is 20%.

Friday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 73. Light west wind.

Saturday: A slight chance of showers, then a chance of showers and thunderstorms after 11am. Partly sunny, with a high near 92. Heat index values as high as 101. Light and vari-

able wind. Chance of precipitation is 50%.

Saturday Night: A chance of showers and thunderstorms. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 74. Calm wind. Chance of precipitation is 30%.

Sunday: A chance of showers before 11am, then a chance of showers and thunderstorms between 11am and 2pm, then showers likely and pos-

sibly a thunderstorm after 2pm. Partly sunny, with a high near 94. Chance of precipitation is 60%.

Sunday Night: Showers likely and possibly a thunderstorm before 8pm. Partly cloudy, with a low around 73. Chance of precipitation is 60%.

Monday: A chance of showers after 2pm. Mostly sunny, with a high near 95. Chance of precipitation is 30%.

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Banana-filled breakfast for school days



- 1 teaspoon almond extract
- 100 grams (3.5 ounces) oats of your choice
- 3 tablespoons unsweetened shredded coconut
- 2 tablespoons ground almonds
- 3 tablespoons sunflower seeds
- 3 tablespoons chopped nuts, such as hazelnuts or almonds
- 40 grams (1.4 ounces) pecans
- Pinch of sea salt

For the caramelized bananas

- 2 unpeeled bananas
- 1 tablespoon coconut oil

To serve

- Coconut yogurt
- 1 teaspoon maple syrup (optional)
- Pinch of thyme (optional)

Preheat the oven to 180 C (350 F). Blend the coconut oil, maple syrup, bananas, and almond extract in a blender until smooth.

Add all the dry ingredients to a large bowl and mix well. Add the wet mixture to the bowl and stir well to combine.

Line a large baking tray with baking paper and then tip the granola mix on to the tray and flatten out. Bake for 25 minutes, until starting to brown. Carefully flip over on the tray, then return to the oven and bake for a further 15 minutes (until you get a nice brown color).

Leave to cool before breaking into smaller chunks, then store in an airtight container for up to 1 week (if not eating straight away).

To make the caramelized bananas, chop off the top end of each of the bananas, then carefully slice through the middle lengthways. Now, peel the bananas.

Melt the coconut oil in a pan on medium heat. Add the banana slices and fry in the oil on one side for 1 to 2 minutes until browned, then flip over to caramelize the other side for another 1 to 2 minutes.

Serve the granola with yogurt, caramelized bananas, a drizzle of maple syrup, and a pinch of thyme if you fancy.

When a new school year is on the horizon, that means families once again must adjust to getting out of the house to the school bus or carpool on time. It is important to begin busy days with a breakfast that will facilitate learning, but parents know convenience is important as well. Parents may want to incorporate some new breakfast options into the mix, particularly ones kids will enjoy.

This tasty recipe for “Banana and Pecan Granola Bowl with Caramelized Bananas” from “Rainbow Bowls” (Sourcebooks) by Niki Webster relies on bananas in two different ways to impart a sweet taste that is hard to beat. The granola makes about four to six portions, so there will be leftovers to enjoy as a snack later in the day or stored away for another time.

Banana and Pecan Granola Bowl with Caramelized Bananas

Serves 2

- 2 tablespoons coconut oil
- 4 tablespoons maple syrup
- 2 very ripe medium bananas

Monday Night: A chance of showers before 8pm. Mostly clear, with a low around 73. Chance of precipitation is 30%.

Tuesday: Mostly sunny and hot, with a high near 97.

Tuesday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 73.

Wednesday: A chance of showers and thunderstorms. Mostly sunny, with a high near 96. Chance of precipitation is 30%.

Wednesday Night: A chance of showers and thunderstorms. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 70. Chance of precipitation is 30%.

Thursday: A chance of showers. Partly sunny, with a high near 86. Chance of precipitation is 50%.

At some point during the misadventure, I had to go to the bathroom. Number two. Of course there was no toilet paper around. I had to use leaves.

Disgusting.

There was no hand sanitizer either. That wasn't a thing those days.

I don't want to think about it.

And that wasn't the worst part of my day.

I don't remember how it happened, but I got a fishing hook caught in my finger. It was barely under the skin.

My brother said, “Don't pull your hand back.”

What I heard was ‘pull your hand back.’

When I did, and that hook dug deeper into my little finger, what everyone else within a few miles of that lake heard was me screaming.

The details of what happened next are fuzzy, but somehow, my brother removed it.

It's a wonder I didn't get tetanus.

And now you know why fishing will never be my thing.

Thing #2.

I'm in the eighth grade. I think. Art class.

At that age, my artistic skills weren't well developed. They never did improve. It didn't matter what project we worked on. Mine weren't very good.

I got a 'B'. I probably deserved a 'D'. I think Miss Buffalino felt sorry for me.

Fast forward almost 50 years to just one month ago.

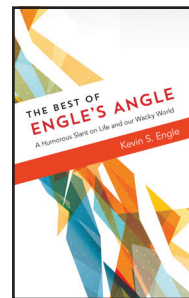
I'm sitting in the basement of my brother-in-law's new house. He's there too, along with his wife and mine. We're all seated around a table.

Why?

It's 8th grade art class all over again. We're painting. Fish.

Oh boy.

My brother-in-law cuts out different types of fish from old wooden pallets. At get-togethers with friends and family, he has painting parties. When



ENGLE'S ANGLE:
“Throw Them Back!”

by Kevin S. Engle

What happens when you take two things you don't like and put them together?

Can you say nightmare?

The first thing. Fishing. One summer day, long ago, when I was just a lad, my brother John was going fishing with ‘the twins.’ Dave and Brian. They lived two houses away. I don't remember why, but I tagged along too. I probably begged my parents to make my brother take me.

That was a mistake. For everyone.

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everyone is finished, he takes pictures and emails them to others who vote for the one they like best.

He already has several schools of fish hanging on the walls of his new home. Most of them are really good. I'm impressed.

The next day, a few more family members joined in, including their little kids.

When the 'fun' was over, 19 wooden fish had been transformed into works of art. I was responsible for three of them.

Of course none of mine won best in show. Somehow, I did get a vote.

That person needs to have their eyes checked.

My fish were not wall-worthy. They belong in the river.

At least one good thing happened that day.

No fish hooks.

But I did get a splinter.

The author's therapist suggested he put away his paint brushes. Forever.

– kevinngle456@comcast.net

The Best of Engle's Angle is available online or pick up a signed copy at a local bookstore.



Ask Stewart

Hey Stewart,

I've noticed you often use humor in your tree answers. Have you considered going on a talent show? Good comedians are hard to find.

– Debbie in Linden

I'm glad you find my tree information humorous, and hopefully helpful and interesting. I've been squirreling away a few jokes and riddles for a rainy day – and it has been raining a lot this July. So here they are!

How do you properly identify a dogwood tree?

By the bark!

What is every single tree's least favorite month?

SepTIMMMBERRR!

How does a lumberjack know how many trees they cut down?

They keep a log.

What did the beaver say to the tree?

It's been nice gnawing you!

Where do saplings go to learn?

Elementree school.

What did the tree do when the bank closed?

It started its own branch.

How do trees access the internet?

They log on.

Why do Platanus occidentalis trees see the doctor a lot?

Because they are Sycamore.

Your Pal in the Trees,

– Stewart

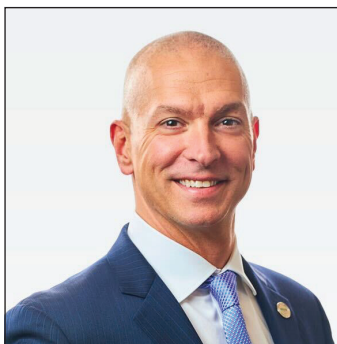
The Front Royal/Warren County Tree Steward program began in 1997 with volunteers dedicated to improving the health of trees by providing educational programs, tree planting and care demonstrations, and tree maintenance throughout the community. The group now consists of over 30 active members with several interns working toward becoming certified tree stewards from our annual "All About Trees Class". Each month Stewart will answer a question from our readers. Please forward it to "Stewart" in care of:

frwctreestewards@comcast.net

and we may publish it in a future issue.

Please visit our website at:

www.treesfrontroyal.org



John Hewa is President and CEO of Rappahannock Electric Cooperative. Courtesy photo.

Powering Our Future: Clarity, Responsibility, and Readiness

Opinion by John Hewa, President & CEO, Rappahannock Electric Cooperative

Across Virginia and the nation, energy demand is climbing — and fast. Virginia's Department of Energy recently projected that annual demand growth for energy is increasing to 6.5%, up from a historic norm of 1.4%. Forecasts from the regional grid operator, PJM, show that electricity demand in Virginia alone will double by 2040. Knowing these forecasts, generation capacity in Virginia must increase rapidly. PJM recently indicated that power supply could run short as early as next summer if action isn't taken.

Virginia has benefited greatly from economic growth fueled by data

centers and new industries, but that growth brings an urgent need for strategic investments in power generation and transmission. At Rappahannock Electric Cooperative (REC), we've long understood that energy decisions made today will shape affordability and reliability for years to come. That's why we take a proactive, member-first approach — one built on responsibility, transparency and care. We have a fundamental obligation to serve, and we intend to meet that obligation — responsibly, reliably and with care.

Let's Talk About the Power Bill

While the nature of our industry requires long-term planning, we know many members are feeling the strains in the cost of living and rising electric bills. Please know we can provide information, answer questions or arrange flexible payment options when times are tough.

It's important to understand that approximately 65% of your electric bill reflects the cost of power supply. These costs are rising because of factors like natural gas market volatility, higher capacity prices, and the need to invest in new generation and transmission to meet growing demand. Capacity charges — set by PJM — are necessary to ensure that power plants are available during the hottest and coldest days of the year.

While we can't directly control power supply costs, we work hard to control the parts we can — the approximately 35% of your bill tied to REC's distribution system of poles,

wires and operations. We:

Keep operations efficient and cost-effective

Leverage technology to wisely plan system improvements, such as right-of-way maintenance

Build resilience into the grid to perform better during storms and extreme temperatures — to avoid or delay equipment replacements

Successfully pursue grants and outside funding to support REC's needs

A Strategic Approach to Growth

Our service territory is growing rapidly — from new homes, small businesses, advanced manufacturing and hyperscale data centers.

To specifically manage the data center growth without exposing traditional members to risk, we created Hyperscale Energy Services — an REC affiliate company. Hyperscale was created to provide the data centers with market power from PJM. Hyperscale also allows us to manage financial risk effectively by ensuring that very large users pay their fair share of system costs. We're proud to lead in this space, getting legislation passed that gives cooperatives more flexibility to serve these large accounts responsibly — aligning with independent recommendations from the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) to protect consumers.

Standing Up for Members at Every Level

Recently, REC filed a new delivery

See NEWS, 10

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NEWS, from 9

rate proposal for large power users with the State Corporate Commission. This is a fairness- focused step to maintain long-term co-op financial strength, ensuring that every member benefits from a reliable, affordable grid.

Behind every pole, every substation, every innovation and every REC employee is one goal: to put members first.

Thank you for your continued trust and partnership.

John Hewa

President and CEO

Rappahannock Electric Cooperative About Rappahannock Electric Cooperative: REC provides electric service to 180,000 connections in parts of 22 Virginia counties. With its general office in Fredericksburg, Va., the Cooperative operates and maintains more than 18,000 miles of power lines through its service area, which ranges from the Blue Ridge Mountains to the tidal waters of the Chesapeake Bay. For more information about REC, please visit www.myrec.coop. Follow REC on Facebook, X, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube.

forts.

Property owners are urged to report suspected boxwood damage using the VDACS Invasive Species Reporting Tool.

Additional information can be found by contacting VDACS at 804-786-3515.



VSP identifies victims in double fatal crash in Augusta County

AUGUSTA COUNTY — Virginia State Police have identified the two individuals who died in a single-vehicle crash early Tuesday morning on Interstate 64 eastbound near the 89-mile marker.

According to police, a 2026 Freightliner TMA crash truck was traveling eastbound around 6:19 a.m. on July 22 when it overcorrected, ran off the right side of the interstate, went through the guardrail, down an embankment, struck a tree, and overturned on its side.

Both the driver and passenger were pronounced dead at the scene.

The driver has been identified as Georgeanna L. Hardesty, 51, of Iron Gate, Va. The passenger has been identified as Sabrina L. Harris, 50, of Covington, Va. Both were wearing seatbelts.

The crash remains under investigation.

Trump administration moves to speed federal approval for data center projects

WASHINGTON — President Donald J. Trump on Wednesday announced a new effort to accelerate federal permitting for data center infrastructure, aiming to streamline the development of facilities critical to supporting the growing demands of artificial intelligence, cloud computing and other digital technologies.

The directive instructs federal agencies to prioritize and expedite the review process for data center projects, citing the need to strengthen American technology infrastructure, reduce permitting delays and encourage private investment. The initiative also calls for improved coordination among federal, state and local agencies.

“Data centers are the backbone of our digital economy and vital to national security,” Trump said in a statement. “My administration is cutting red tape to ensure the United States leads in AI, quantum computing, and next-generation technologies.”

The move is expected to ease permitting timelines for the construction, expansion and power needs of data centers, which require reliable access to large amounts of energy and water. The administration’s action builds on

earlier efforts to reform the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review process and reduce regulatory hurdles across infrastructure sectors.

Industry leaders have long cited permitting delays as a major challenge in building new data center capacity, especially in fast-growing regions like Northern Virginia — home to the world’s largest concentration of data centers. The administration says the new policy will help ensure these projects are approved faster while maintaining environmental safeguards.

Regulators approve Dominion’s energy plan, flag rising costs amid data center demand

By Shirleen Guerra
The Center Square

(The Center Square) — Virginia regulators have approved Dominion Energy’s 2024 long-term energy plan but raised serious concerns about rising costs and whether new projects are truly needed to meet future electricity demand, particularly from the com-

monwealth’s fast-growing data center industry.

In a final order issued Tuesday, the State Corporation Commission found Dominion’s Integrated Resource Plan legally sufficient as required by law. However, the commission made clear this does not mean it approves the size, cost or specifics of any future infrastructure. Regulators warned that Dominion’s proposals could significantly impact customer bills and directed the company to provide more transparent, cost-effective alternatives



Box tree moth detected in Virginia for first time

Invasive pest threatens boxwood plants in Clarke and Loudoun Counties

RICHMOND, Va. — The Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) has confirmed the presence of the invasive box tree moth (*Cydalima perspectalis*) at four sites in Clarke and Loudoun Counties, marking the first known detection of the pest in Virginia.

The box tree moth is an aggressive insect capable of severely damaging or even killing boxwood plants (*Buxus* species). Its caterpillars feed voraciously on the foliage, often leading to complete defoliation in cases of heavy infestation. VDACS announced that it will treat boxwood plants where the pest is confirmed.

Native to East Asia, the box tree moth has become a destructive pest in Europe and was first detected in the United States in 2021 by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) in New York. Since then, it has been identified in Delaware, Massachusetts, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia.

“Early detection and rapid response are vital for the management of any newly introduced invasive pest,” VDACS said in a statement. The agency has already surveyed the surrounding areas of the Virginia detections and plans to continue surveillance ef-



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WORD SCRAMBLE

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Answer: Pastry

GUESS WHO ?

I am an actor and politician born in Austria on July 30, 1947. I decided to pursue a career as a bodybuilder at age 14. I became the youngest person to win Mr. Universe. Eventually I found myself in Hollywood and became a well-known action star, and later governor.


Answer: Arnold Schwarzenegger

Hamrick's Sudoku!

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!

Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle! (Answer in back.)



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

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in upcoming plans.

Among the commission's directives, Dominion must include side-by-side modeling of a least-cost plan and a plan that complies with the Virginia Clean Economy Act. Each version must be modeled both with and without projected electricity demand from data centers. The commission also ordered Dominion to extend its planning horizon from 15 to 20 years and improve access to its modeling data for stakeholders and officials across the commonwealth.

The order calls for stricter energy efficiency goals as well. The commission rejected Dominion's proposed savings targets of 2.1% to 2.7% and instead set new requirements of 3% in 2026, 4% in 2027, and 5% in 2028. Regulators also directed the company to assess additional battery storage, include a scenario in which Virginia rejoins the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, and model long-duration

storage technologies as they become viable.

Environmental groups echoed the commission's concerns, saying Dominion's plan relies too heavily on gas and leaves communities at risk. In a joint statement, the Southern Environmental Law Center and Appalachian Voices said the order confirms the plan was flawed and warned it could lead to more pollution and high bills. "Dominion may attempt to proceed with an 'accepted' plan, but the Commission has recognized it is the product of a flawed process," said SELC senior attorney Nate Benforado.

Conservative policy groups have also weighed in. The Thomas Jefferson Institute warned that the commonwealth is running out of baseload power to meet peak demand and argued that policies supporting intermittent wind and solar energy could increase reliance on imports. In a recent report, the group said rapid growth in data centers and artificial intelligence infrastructure is accelerating demand and putting pressure on

the grid.

"Virginia is quickly running out of sufficient baseload power to support its demand," the report said. The group supports repealing or scaling back the Virginia Clean Economy Act, which phases out coal and natural gas over time.

While the IRP does not authorize specific projects, it guides Dominion's decisions on future generation and transmission. That includes power plants, transmission lines and grid upgrades that can lead to rate increases. Regulators made clear that approval of the plan does not mean approval of those future costs.

Fake movie money circulating in Stephens City, police warn

The Stephens City Police Department is warning residents and local businesses to be on the lookout for counterfeit currency labeled "For Motion Picture Purposes" or "Replica." These fake bills, which resemble \$20 and \$100 denominations, have been reported in the area and can be easily purchased online.

"We want to raise awareness that these fake bills are out there," the department stated in a social media post. "If you work in a field that receives cash payments, please use extra

See NEWS, 12

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Upcoming events with Dan McDermott

Fri. July 25, 2025 (7:30-11:30pm)
Music Bingo/Karaoke-New Market Eagles*

Sat. July 26, 2025 (7:00-10:30pm)
Karaoke/Music Bingo-Woodstock Moose*

Mon. July 28, 2025 (6pm)
Kids Karaoke at Warren County Fair
warrencountyfair.com

Wed. July 30, 2025 (7pm)
Warren County Fair Karaoke Contest
warrencountyfair.com

Sat. Aug 2, 2025 (6-10pm)
Music Bingo & Karaoke at Shenandoah Valley Axe Throwing Company
OPEN TO THE PUBLIC: 20 South St. Front Royal, VA 22630

Wed. Aug 6, 2025 (6-9pm)
Trivia & Music Bingo at Shenandoah Valley Axe Throwing Company
OPEN TO THE PUBLIC: 20 South St. Front Royal, VA 22630

Thurs. Aug 7, 2025 (6:30-8:30pm)
Music Bingo at Winchester, Va. Elks*

Sat. Aug 9, 2025 (6-10pm)
Music Bingo & Karaoke at Shenandoah Valley Axe Throwing Company
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Wed. Aug 13, 2025 (6-9pm)
Trivia & Music Bingo at Shenandoah Valley Axe Throwing Company
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Thurs. Aug 14, 2025 (6-8pm)
Karaoke & Music Bingo at Good Lions Lodge* - 413-H South Street (Royal Plaza across from Fitness Evolution)
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NEWS, from 11

care to ensure the authenticity of all money exchanged.”

According to the release, the counterfeit notes include clear markings such as “FOR MOTION PICTURE PURPOSES” or “COPY” where official security features or legal tender markings would normally be.

Officials urge anyone who encounters these bills to refuse them and immediately contact their local law enforcement agency.

Worker revived after electrocution and 25-foot fall in Shenandoah Farms

A man was revived and flown to a

trauma center after being electrocuted and falling from a ladder while working on a cable line in the Shenandoah Farms area on Thursday, July 18.

Warren County Fire and Rescue (WCFR) responded to the incident on Wendy Hill Road, where the worker was reportedly struck by electricity suspected to have arced from a nearby powerline due to high humidity in the air. The shock caused the worker to fall approximately 25 feet from the ladder he was using.

Coworkers quickly rushed to help and found the man in cardiac arrest. Bystander CPR was performed immediately, and when emergency medical personnel arrived, they were able to restart the man’s heart. EMS crews provided advanced life support at the scene and determined the patient

needed trauma care due to the severity of his injuries.

AirCare 4, based in Front Royal, transported the patient to MedStar Washington Hospital Center.

“We applaud the quick actions taken by the patient’s coworkers. Without their help, the outcome probably would’ve been different,” said Fire Chief James Bonzano. “This incident highlights the critical importance of being CPR certified. Every second counts, and having the knowledge and skills to perform CPR can make the difference between life and death.”

Units responding to the call included Ambulance 6 (Shenandoah Farms), Engine 4 (Linden), Medic 10 (North Warren), and Battalion Chief 1.

WCFR offers monthly CPR courses, which can be found at www.warren-countyfire.com/635/events.

Sherando Band golf tournament raises over \$10,000 for student musicians

STEPHENS CITY — The Sherando Band Boosters raised more than \$10,000 in net proceeds through the 2025 Sherando Band Charity Golf Tournament, organizers announced.

Held earlier this year, the tournament brought together sponsors, volunteers, and community members in support of the high school’s music program. Funds will help pay for student instruments, music instruction, and travel opportunities.

Guy Curtis, who chaired the event, extended thanks to all who supported the effort, including hole sponsors, prize donors, and volunteers.

Major sponsors included Q102.5 Shenandoah Country (iHeartMedia) and Malloy Automotive Group, as well as a number of local businesses.

For more information or to support the program, visit www.sherandoband.org or email sherandobandbooster@gmail.com

Winchester company joins Virginia’s international export accelerator program

WINCHESTER — A Winchester-based manufacturer is one of 13 Virginia companies selected to join an elite state program aimed at helping businesses expand into international markets.

Ashworth Bros., Inc., headquartered in the City of Winchester, has joined the Virginia Leaders in Export Trade (VALET) program, a two-year business acceleration initiative managed by the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP). The program provides participating companies with customized international sales strategies, access to a network of global experts, and direct introductions to potential partners overseas.

Ashworth Bros., a global leader in conveyor belting systems, is the only Shenandoah Valley business included in the latest cohort. The company

designs and manufactures metal and plastic belting solutions for industries ranging from food processing to automotive manufacturing.

VALET is designed for Virginia companies with established domestic success that are ready to grow internationally. Participants receive support from a team of international service providers and market research consultants spanning more than 120 countries. The program also includes in-country matchmaking, educational seminars, and a customized plan to guide expansion efforts.

The announcement came as Governor Glenn Youngkin welcomed a new group of companies into the program while also recognizing 13 graduates

that completed the two-year track.

Since its inception, 425 Virginia companies have completed the VALET program. Currently, 58 companies are active participants. According to VEDP, businesses in the program routinely report increased international sales and global partnerships that generate high-quality jobs across the Commonwealth.

Virginia exports approximately \$70 billion in goods and services annually. In 2023, companies working with VEDP’s international trade division attributed \$1.5 billion in overseas sales to its assistance, supporting more than 13,700 jobs.

Ashworth Bros. now joins that expanding network of Virginia business-



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es reaching global markets through the VALET program.

More information on the VALET program is available at vedp.org.

AstraZeneca to build largest global manufacturing facility in Virginia

RICHMOND — AstraZeneca has chosen Virginia as the site of its largest single manufacturing investment in company history, Governor Glenn Youngkin announced this week.

The global biopharmaceutical leader plans to build a state-of-the-art drug substance facility in the Commonwealth as part of its broader \$50

billion U.S. investment strategy by 2030. Governor Youngkin was joined at the announcement by AstraZeneca CEO Pascal Soriot and White House National Economic Council Director Kevin Hassett.

“This project will set the standard for the latest technological advancements in pharmaceutical manufacturing,” Youngkin said. “It will create hundreds of highly skilled jobs and further strengthen the nation’s domestic supply chain.”

Soriot called the decision a reflection of Virginia’s workforce and life sciences ecosystem.

“It reflects the Commonwealth of Virginia’s desire to create highly skilled jobs in science and technology, and

will strengthen the country’s domestic supply chain for medicines,” he said, adding that the investment will help AstraZeneca reach its goal of \$80 billion in annual revenue by 2030.

The new facility will incorporate artificial intelligence, automation, and data analytics to support production in key therapeutic areas, including oncology, cardiovascular, renal, metabolism, respiratory, immunology, and rare diseases.

Virginia officials hailed the announcement as a major win for the state’s growing life sciences sector.

“This new partnership with AstraZeneca is an amazing opportunity for the Commonwealth,” said state Sen. Creigh Deeds. “It will transform our bioscience economy and reshore our critical pharmaceutical supply chain.”

AstraZeneca, headquartered in the United Kingdom, sells medicines in over 125 countries. The company focuses on developing treatments in oncology, rare diseases, cardiovascular, respiratory, renal, metabolism, and immunology.

of the CSX railway.

The Renaissance Drive extension is administered by Frederick County, funded partly by the Virginia Department of Transportation’s Revenue Sharing program. As part of the project, the railroad crossing on nearby Route 649 (Springdale Road) will be closed beginning July 18. Route 649 will have a dead end on both sides of the rail line.

The eastern end of Renaissance Drive meets Route 11 at a signalized intersection. The western end of Renaissance Drive stops at a T-intersection with Shady Elm Road. Motorists on all these roadways should be alert for traffic-pattern changes.

The opening date for Renaissance Drive and the closing date for the Route 649 railroad crossing are subject to change. All work is weather permitting.

Warren County – New Rockland Road Bridge Opens Five Months Ahead of Schedule

STAUNTON – The new Route 658 (Rockland Road) bridge in Warren County opened to traffic July 11, 2025, five months ahead of schedule. Since early 2024, contractors for the Virginia Department of Transportation had been constructing a new bridge over the Norfolk Southern Railway near Front Royal and the Virginia Inland Port. This project improves Rockland Road traffic flow reliability while accommodating future rail needs.

Removal of all detour signs will likely continue through the week of

July 14. Rockland Road motorists should be alert for shoulder closures and occasional lane closures as needed through September 2025 during final phases of the project. All work is weather permitting. Details and traffic updates are found on the VDOT project page.

Before bridge construction, Rockland Road motorists experienced frequent and often lengthy delays at the railroad crossing due to slow-moving or stopped trains, including those loading or unloading at the Virginia Inland Port. Rail traffic will pass underneath the new bridge while vehicles travel uninterrupted over the bridge.

The Rockland Road bridge is 220 feet long and 42 feet wide with a minimum vertical clearance of 23 feet. The bridge’s height and length allow passage of double-stacked freight containers and would accommodate a future third rail line.

The project also realigns part of Route 705 (Fishnet Boulevard), the entrance to Rockland Park. With the opening of the new bridge, motorists can now approach Rockland Park from either direction on Rockland Road.

A construction contract valued at \$11.8 million was awarded in October 2023 to Shirley Contracting Company LLC of Lorton, Virginia. The total estimated cost for this project is \$20.6 million including preliminary engineering, right-of-way and utility relocation expenses, and construction. It is partly funded by a BUILD grant awarded to the Virginia Port Author-

See NEWS, 14

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Frederick County – Renaissance Drive Opens

Route 873 (Renaissance Drive) in Frederick County was scheduled to fully open to traffic on or about Friday, July 18. The two-lane roadway previously connected Route 11 (Old Valley Pike) and Route 1129 (Prosperity Drive). The new half-mile section extends further west between Prosperity Drive and Route 651 (Shady Elm Road). It includes an at-grade crossing

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Thurs. Aug 14, 2025 (6-8pm)
Thurs. Aug 28, 2025 (6-8pm)

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Karaoke & MUSIC BINGO
 with Dan McDermott

ROUTE 11 DJ
 540-365-3000

NEWS, from 13

ity by the United States Department of Transportation in 2018.

Investments and Improvements Along Interstate 81

RICHMOND, VA – Governor Glenn Youngkin announced that the Commonwealth of Virginia has taken major strides to enhance safety, reduce congestion and improve the reliability of Interstate 81, unlocking this vital corridor for continued economic growth.

“From Winchester to Bristol, Interstate 81 is the backbone of western Virginia, playing a critical role in supporting our state’s economy,” said Governor Glenn Youngkin. “We’re making unprecedented investments in the 325 miles of Interstate 81 which run through the Commonwealth, accelerating critical widening and safety projects to completion, while making a real difference for the people who drive this corridor and depend on it as an economic engine for the region. I’m proud of the collective work with the General Assembly over the last three and a half years to allocate an additional \$245 million towards Interstate 81 improvements.”

“Advancing the \$4 billion Interstate 81 Corridor Improvement Program has been a top priority of Governor Youngkin’s administration,” said Secretary of Transportation W. Sheppard Miller III. “As we continue to make historic investments and improvements along I-81, we’ll begin to see more safety vests, orange cones, warning signs and flashing lights as larger construction projects get underway. I urge everyone driving the corridor to be patient and extra cautious as we work to make this road safer and more efficient for everyone.”

The I-81 Corridor Improvement Program (CIP), valued at almost \$4 billion, funds 65 construction projects, hundreds of individual traffic operations upgrades, and enhancements to transit and passenger rail service along the I-81 Corridor. The Program is funded by revenues dedicated by the Code of Virginia to the corridor and an additional \$245 million in General Fund moneys approved by the Governor through the Virginia State Budget.

Of the 65 construction projects, 37 projects have been completed, including three truck-climbing lanes, eight curve improvements, and 26 merge-lane extensions at challenging interchanges. Traffic operations improvements have also been implemented, consisting of dozens of new digital message boards and traffic cameras, intersection upgrades along key parallel routes, and towing industry incentives for quick clearance of crashes and other incidents.

In addition to the completed projects, there are 14 I-81 CIP construction projects currently underway. They include additional travel lanes near Bristol, Salem, Staunton and Strasburg, new truck-climbing lanes at the Augusta-Rockingham county line,

and numerous interchange improvements in the Wytheville area.

“We have not seen this level of construction along I-81 since the interstate was built more than 50 years ago,” said Virginia Department of Transportation Commissioner Stephen C. Brich. “And there are still many improvements on the horizon.”

“A lot of safety improvements are happening on Interstate 81,” said Senator Mark D. Obenshain. “I was pleased to carry the legislation which created the I-81 Corridor Improvement Program, and as Chair of the I-81 Advisory Committee my priority will be to continue to seek funding for I-81 safety improvements to make this interstate even more reliable and safe. I appreciate the work Governor Youngkin and his team have done to advance safety projects on this critical corridor, making life better for citizens and visitors who drive through the Commonwealth of Virginia on Interstate 81.”

“As vice-chair of the I-81 Advisory Committee, I’m pleased to see the ongoing transformation along this

critical transportation artery,” said Delegate Terry L. Austin. “I’m proud of the work we’ve accomplished with Governor Youngkin to deliver these historic investments that are making travel along the I-81 Corridor safer, more reliable, and more efficient. This effort is a long-term commitment to improving quality of life and unlocking sustained economic growth and opportunity in western Virginia, and I look forward to identifying new areas of improvement as we work toward completing the first tranche of projects.”

By early 2026, construction on major widening projects in the Roanoke and Harrisonburg areas will begin. Design and engineering work are underway for additional travel lanes near Winchester, in Rockbridge County, and between Salem and Christiansburg. All of the projects currently in the I-81 CIP are scheduled for completion by 2035.

This year, Virginia is taking a fresh look at Interstate 81 through a year-long corridor study to identify the

next group of needs to be addressed. Public meetings are being held July 14-17 along the corridor to share detailed crash and congestion data along with potential solutions. Public input at the meetings and through an online survey will be essential for helping identify the greatest needs and prioritize potential improvements. Following another round of public input this fall, a final report will be delivered to the Commonwealth Transportation Board.

Details of the current I-81 CIP and the 2025 corridor study can be found at Improve81.org.

C. Todd Gilbert Sworn In As United States Attorney for the Western District of Virginia

ROANOKE, Va – Christopher Todd Gilbert was sworn in July 14, 2025 as United States Attorney for the Western District of Virginia. Appointed by Attorney General Pamela Bondi, U.S.

Attorney Gilbert took the oath of office administered by United States District Judge Thomas T. Cullen.

“I am honored to serve as the United States Attorney for the Western District of Virginia,” Mr. Gilbert said today. “In my heart, I have always been a prosecutor and to return to that role now is the opportunity of a lifetime. My wife and I have spent our lives in the Western District and to play a part in keeping it safe is a privilege. I look forward to working with all our state, local, and federal law enforcement partners to make the Western District of Virginia safer for all its residents.”

As the United States Attorney, Mr. Gilbert serves as the chief federal law enforcement officer in the Western District of Virginia, responsible for representing the United States in all civil and criminal litigation. U.S. Attorney Gilbert leads an office of nearly 30 federal prosecutors and support staff.

The Western District of Virginia comprises approximately sixty percent of the land area in the Commonwealth of Virginia and approximately 2.2 million of its citizens. The district covers a large geographic area. While the northern corner is less than fifty miles from Washington D.C., Lee County, the western tip of the district, is farther west than Detroit and is closer to six other state capitols than it is to Richmond.

Before becoming U.S. Attorney, Mr. Gilbert was a state prosecutor with nearly fifteen years’ experience in four different Commonwealth’s Attorneys offices, all located within the Western District of Virginia- Lynchburg, Shenandoah, Warren and Frederick.

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U.S. Attorney Gilbert has significant experience prosecuting violent crimes, including homicides, as well as robberies, drug conspiracies, sex crimes, gun crimes, and fraud. He has also taught the art of trial advocacy to young prosecutors.

In addition, U.S. Attorney Gilbert served nearly twenty years in the Virginia legislature as a member of the Virginia House of Delegates, serving as the 57th Speaker of the House from 2022-2024. A core focus of Mr. Gilbert's legislative experience was in the area of public safety. He served as a member of the Virginia State Crime Commission, the Virginia Criminal Sentencing Commission, the Criminal Justice Services Board, and The Commission on VASAP (Virginia Alcohol Safety Action Program) as well as Chairman of the Criminal Subcommittee of the Courts of Justice Committee. He was named Legislator of the Year by the Virginia Sheriff's Association, the Virginia State Police Association and the Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police.

U.S. Attorney Gilbert and his family have deep ties to the Western District of Virginia. He was raised in the Shenandoah Valley and graduated from the University of Virginia and the Southern Methodist University School of Law where he served as president of the Student Bar Association (student body) and won the school's annual mock trial competition. He and his wife Jennifer live on a small farm in the Shenandoah Valley with their two young boys. Jennifer Wishon Gilbert is a native of Bedford County, Virginia, attended Virginia Tech and worked as a broadcast journalist for WDBJ in Roanoke.

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Thursday, August 14th from 1:00 pm to 2:00 PM

In person. Compare Medicare Advantage plans vs. Original Medicare and compare and contrast with Medigap to see what's right for you. Presented by Seniors First VICAP. Questions? Call VICAP at 540-635-7141 or visit seniorsfirst.info

Sewing an Apron: Parts 1 & 2
Wednesdays, Part 1: August 20th and Part 2: August 27th from 5:00-6:30 PM

In Person. Have the basics of sewing under your belt? This workshop will introduce you to the art of sewing an apron. Bring your own fabric to your liking or use our stock of basic cotton. We will use two cotton colors/prints (1 1/2 Yards of at least 41" – 45" wide fabric each):

Color A 1 1/2 Yards of 41" - 45" wide

Color B 1 1/2 Yards of 41" – 45" wide

Please note that Part 2 of this program is a continuation of Part 1. If you cannot attend Part 1, you will not be able to complete the project in Part 2. Please ensure you can attend both programs before registering.

*Must have completed Sewing 101 or have a basic working knowledge of using a sewing machine. *No food allowed in the studio and patrons between 13-17 must be accompanied by an adult. Registration required.

Ongoing Programs
What the Tech! Every Tuesday from 2:00 PM to 3:30 PM - In person. Need help with technology? Come by the library's Meeting Room B where we will be going over computers and other technology basics. Having trouble with your phone, tablet, laptop, or other device? Bring it in, and we'll

help!

Studio 330: Embroidery Club - Every Thursday from 10:00 PM to 12:00 PM - In person. Join us for Hand Embroidery Stitchers every Thursday morning! Bring your own needlework project to work on for a morning of crafting and socializing. *No food allowed in the studio and patrons between 13-17 must be accompanied by an adult.

Studio 330 Walk-in Hours - Every Thursday from 12:00 PM to 4:00 PM - In person. Come tour Studio 330 or bring your project to work on. Walk-In hours are provided on a first come, first serve basis. *Glowforge is not available during walk-in hours. No food allowed in the studio and patrons between 13-17 must be accompanied by an adult.

Studio 330: String Theory- A Fiber Arts Club - Every Saturday from 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM - In person. Welcome to a fiber arts community for experienced, novice, or first-time artists 13 and up looking to meet other artists, relax, and/or share their expertise! Bring your own knitting, crochet, weaving, or other project to Studio 330 on Saturdays 2pm to 4pm *No food allowed in the studio and patrons between 13-17 must be accompanied by an adult.

Scary Words Book Club - Saturday, August 2nd from 2:30 PM to 4:30 PM - First Saturday of every month. In person. A horror book club for people who should be afraid of the dark. This month's titles: World War Z by Max Brooks and Small Spaces by Katherine Arden.

Bad Romance - Wednesday, August 6th from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM - First Wednesday of every month. In person. Do you consider yourself a hopeless romantic? Are bad romances a guilty pleasure of yours? Then you should join us for Bad Romance, where Samuels Public Library will have a themed discussion for the romance genre every month. August's theme is Out of this World! Indulge us with your favorite romance books, movies, music or other media related to the topic, and possibly discover a new treat in this awesome informal discussion! New members are always welcome!

Step It Up: Line Dancing Fun - Wednesday, August 6th & August 20 from 6:30 PM to 7:30 PM - First & Third Wednesday of every month. In person. Grab your boots and join us for an evening of toe-tapping fun! Whether you're a seasoned dancer or

just getting started, this line dancing session is a great way to get moving, learn new steps, and have a blast with friends. No experience needed!

Studio 330: Genealogy Club - Wednesday, August 13th from 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM - Second Wednesday of every month. In person. Interested in your family's history? Already done extensive research and want to be able to share your finds? Join our genealogy club where both novices and experts alike can come together and talk about different genealogy topics. Register or drop-in. August Heirloom Roadshow – Bring a small family heirloom with a story to share in the group. We will use our lightbox to take a photograph and discuss how to incorporate the story into the photo for future generations! *No food allowed in the studio and patrons between 13-17 must be accompanied by an adult.

Seniors First Counseling - Thursday, August 14th from 2:00 to 4:00 pm - Second Thursday of every month. In person. Sign up to meet with Seniors First for one-on-one assistance to navigate Medicare, review coverage options, and identify programs that can help lower healthcare costs. Registration required. Contact Reference staff directly to sign up for a 20 minute session.

Books & Beyond Book Club - Thursday, August 14th from 6:00 PM to 7:45 PM - Second Thursday of every month. In person. Do you love books and sharing them as much as we do? Join us to delve into new worlds of conversation about new books at your community's public library! The theme this month is: Monsters: unusual animals or plants in large size or structure.

Phoenix Project – Hope for New Beginnings - Tuesday, August 19th from 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM - Third Tuesday of every month. In person. Serving all members of the Front Royal/Warren County community

who have experienced or are currently experiencing domestic violence or sexual assault, Phoenix Project Advocates are available to provide crisis intervention, supportive counseling, safety planning, information, education, and more. Their services are free, confidential, and trauma-informed. Hope. Help. Healing.

Walkabout Wednesdays - Wednesday, August 27th from 10:30 to 11:30 am - Last Wednesday of every month - In person. Join Extension Master Gardener Volunteers on Walkabout Wednesdays where they discuss and care for the indoor plants at the library. Monthly topics for mini-lessons will vary each month. This month: learn about tools and tips for house plant care.

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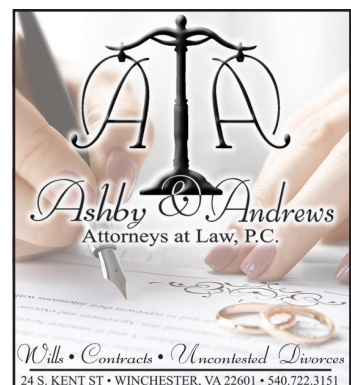
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C	H	I	P	S	P	H	I	N	X				
R	E	D	E	C	O	R	A	T	I	O	N		
O	R	E	G	A	N	O	O	B	S	E	S		
B	A	S	S	O	S	A	C	E	U	R			
		E	R	A			K	A	K	A			
		I	D	E	A	S	S	L	U	B			
		A	T	D	R	O	P	S	R	I			
		C	I	A	E	D	P						
C	P	M	E	E	L	S	A	B					
E	R	A	S	E	R	A	L						
T	A	R	A			H	I	M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

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

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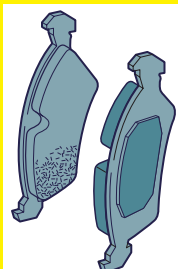
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