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Amherst County

**Business
incentive
measures
endorsed**

EDA, consultant's plan to focus on Madison Heights, business attraction, start-ups

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In an effort to increase private-sector investment in Amherst County in upcoming years, the county's board of supervisors has endorsed several incentives focusing on Madison Heights, existing small businesses, start-up and micro-business efforts and overall business attraction.

As part of the county's ongoing business friendliness initiative that picked up momentum in 2018, the Amherst County Economic Development Authority hired Mangum Solutions to analyze the county's incentives. Neal Barber, of the Glen Allen-based consulting firm, and EDA Director Victoria Hanson brought the study before the board during its April 2 meeting.

Barber said the analysis concludes the county's current incentives are not competitive with surrounding localities that have benefited from enterprise zones and funding from the Virginia Tobacco Region Revitalization Committee. Incentives in place also are not structured to support start-up and existing small businesses, he told supervisors.

"While some of the larger businesses in the county have taken advantage of the existing incentives, the smaller businesses have not been able to take advantage of those," Barber said.

The board voted 3-0, with members Jennifer Moore and David Pugh absent, to endorse the incentive recommendations during last week's meeting. In Madison Heights, a newly established enterprise zone would be structured to incentivize development along the U.S. 29 Business corridor. The U.S. 29 enterprise zone would be structured to encourage redevelopment of commercial property

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Kennedy Campbell, portraying Ariel, sings during a scene at a recent dress rehearsal of "Disney's The Little Mermaid" at Amherst County High School. Kennedy said it's fun playing Ariel because "she's really curious and takes risks... what I especially like about her is I can easily jump into the character."

ACHS goes under the sea

Spring musical 'The Little Mermaid' allows students to get creative in props, set design

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Amherst County High School junior Kennedy Campbell long has admired Disney princess characters.

She's diving into portraying one as the high school's drama program goes under the sea for a production of 'Disney's The Little Mermaid,' which runs April 11 through April 14. Campbell will play Ariel, the musical's mermaid protagonist, as she wrestles with leaving her surroundings for the experience of becoming human.

“They're really nice kids. It makes you want to be here and work even harder.”

— Patricia Emmert, program's director

Campbell said it's fun playing a Disney princess lead.

"Especially Ariel," she said during a recent practice. "She's



Grimsby, played by Carson Peters, second from right, speaks to Prince Eric, played by Logan Scruggs, aboard a boat on the sea during a recent dress rehearsal.

really curious and takes risks... what I especially like about her is I can easily jump into the character."

Patricia Emmert, the theater program's director, said about 50 students are involved in the produc-

tion with a lot of moving parts in set design, props and putting a creative mark on a play synonymous with the 1989 Walt Disney film. Emmert said

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Madison Heights mother sentenced in baby son's death



Maegan Elaine Collier, of Madison Heights, appears during her sentencing hearing April 3 in Amherst Circuit Court. She was sentenced to six years behind bars in connection with the death of her infant son, Kolton.

Maegan Collier to serve 6 years; judge describes photo evidence as 'haunting'

BY JUSTIN FAULCONER
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A Madison Heights mother was sentenced to six years in prison last Wednesday on charges of involuntary manslaughter and child neglect causing serious injury in the death of her infant son.

Maegan Elaine Collier, 24, was found guilty of the two felony charges in Amherst Circuit Court in

October 2018. Her son, Kolton, was just shy of 2 months old when he was found unresponsive at her Madison Heights apartment on March 6, 2018. He was pronounced dead a short while later that day.

At Collier's April 3 sentencing hearing, Deputy Commonwealth's Attorney Amber Drumheller said the child starved to death due to his mother's lack of care and addressed Collier's methamphetamine

use.

"She allowed her own drug addiction to become more important than her own child's life," Drumheller said.

Kolton died a "very slow and painful" death, Drumheller said.

"Unfortunately Amherst County and its residents have fallen victim to the devastation of the drug epidemic," Drumheller said. "Kolton Collier is one of those victims."

A medical examiner testified at a June 2018 hearing in Amherst Juvenile and Domestic Relations

Court Kolton suffered from chronic malnutrition and dehydration. The cause of death was not determined.

Amherst County Sheriff's investigator Clay Thompson testified in an interview Collier said she woke up around 5 a.m. the morning of her son's death, gave him a bottle and went back to sleep. When she woke up shortly before noon he was unresponsive and she immediately called a neighbor, also a drug user, to come over, Thompson testified.

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Classifieds

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