

**REP. CLINE  
TOWN HALL**  
ADDRESSES IMPEACHMENT,  
GUN REGULATIONS  
» INSIDE, A6

**ACHS LOOKS TO  
FINISH STRONG**  
» SPORTS, B1



# AMHERST NEW ERA~PROGRESS

www.NewEraProgress.com

Amherst County's only hometown newspaper

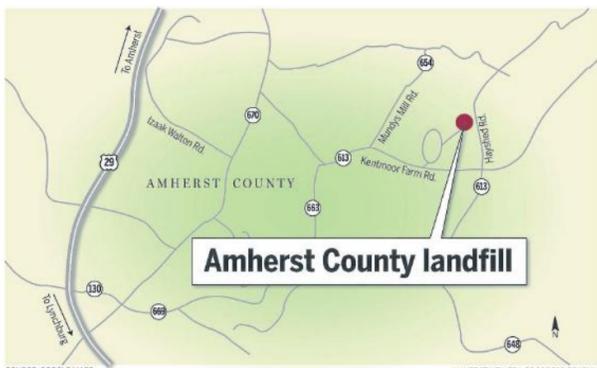
**\$1**

Amherst, Va.

Vol. 138 - No. 5 / Two sections, 12 pages

Thursday, January 30, 2020

## Board OKs deal for transfer station



The new transfer station in Amherst County will be on the site of the county's landfill in Madison Heights.

**\$2.2M facility to be built at current landfill; county will close landfill**

By Justin Faulconer  
jfaulconer@newsadvance.com

After more than a year of study and heavy discussion, the Amherst County Board of Supervisors voted 4-1 on Jan. 21 to approve a contract with a Rocky Mount-based company to build a new transfer station waste disposal.

The new station, estimated at \$2.2 million, will be built at the county's landfill on Kentmoor Farm Road in Madison Heights.

By moving ahead with the agreement with Price Buildings Inc. for the new facility, the county will not expand the landfill and intends to close it, though County Administrator Dean Rodgers said a new cell potentially could be opened if necessary in the future.

The \$2.7 million contract also includes \$415,200 for the company to build a new solid waste convenience center site on Boxwood Farm Road and \$75,800 for improvements to an existing

solid waste center on Coolwell Road.

Rodgers said the county's goal is to have the transfer station — a building where waste hauled in is loaded on trucks and disposed of elsewhere — constructed by Nov. 11, 2021, based on projections of the life remaining in the landfill's current cell.

A report previously before the board by Lynchburg-based engineering firm Draper Aden

SEE STATION | A5

## First citizen appointed to service authority

Board picks Madison Heights resident to be one of two people to join the Amherst Co. group

By Justin Faulconer  
jfaulconer@newsadvance.com

The first of two citizen appointments to the Amherst County Service Authority was made during the board of supervisors' Jan. 21 meeting.

After interviewing three candidates for two positions on the authority's governing board, supervisors appointed Madison Heights resident Wesley D. Wells to the post. The other appointment will come later; supervisors decided to advertise for more candidates.

Woods, a local business owner and part-time farmer, has been a resident since 1996 when his company, Myers & Woods Appraisal Group, was established. He also has ownership in a number of rental properties in the Madison Heights area that are part of the authority's customer base.

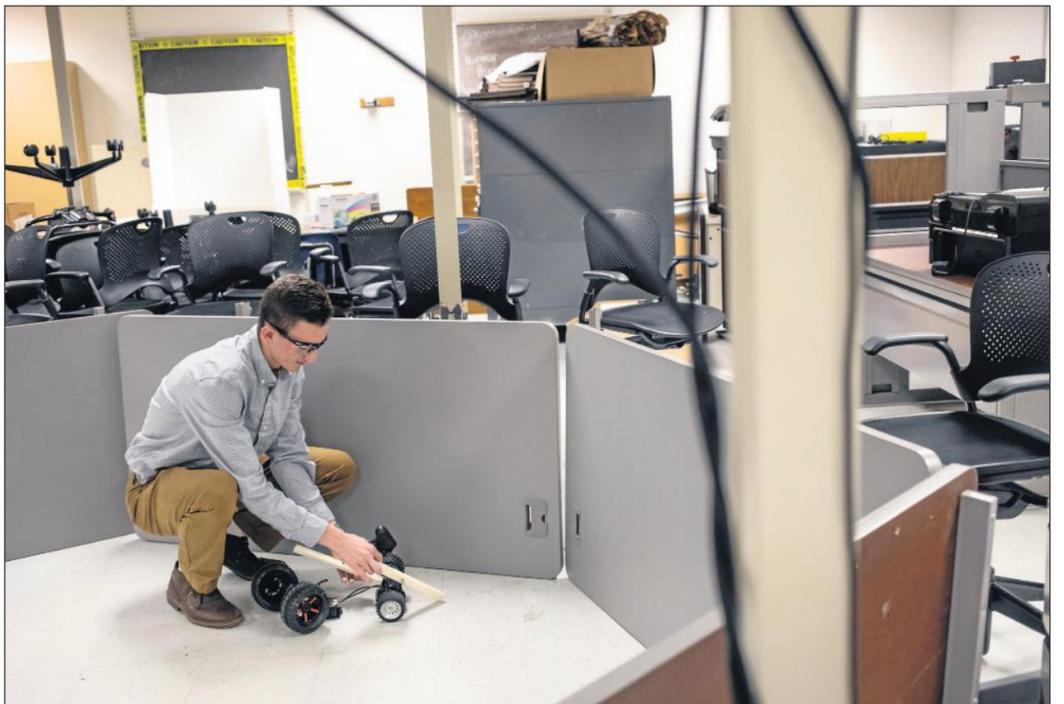
Woods said he is honored to receive the opportunity to serve and is looking forward to joining the authority's board, which for more than 60 years has consisted of supervisors.

"I'm pretty excited about the opportunity to see if I can be of assistance to the county," Woods said following the meeting.

SEE FIRST | A5

## Crash course in robotics

Amherst students create dueling robotic vehicles in engineering drawing course



Senior Sam Gowdy steps into the makeshift ring to retrieve pieces left of "The Junkyard Bot" after the tournament Jan. 24 at Amherst County High School.

By Justin Faulconer  
jfaulconer@newsadvance.com

In a makeshift octagon of tables at Amherst County High School last Friday afternoon, the moment, weeks in the making, had arrived for a fight to the finish.

By remote control, seniors Aaron Elliott and Sam Gowdy ushered their handcrafted miniature vehicle into

the mini-arena to square off against junior Austin Jerose's machine.

The school's inaugural BattleBot Tournament was about to begin.

"Can you imagine the bragging rights?" Elliott said while prepping his and Gowdy's machine prior to the bout.

Elliott and Gowdy's robot "The Junkyard Bot" emerged victorious Friday after repeatedly ramming

Jerose's robot, which had trouble starting. Instructor John Moats' own creation, "The Ankle Biter," awaited the winner for another round of ramming the vehicles together until one could not continue.

"That was really, really fun," Elliott said at the conclusion, pleased with their robot's performance. "It did

SEE BATTLE | A3

## Central Elementary spreading kindness around the world

School has raised hundreds of dollars for outreaches both international, national

By Justin Faulconer  
jfaulconer@newsadvance.com

In a children's health clinic in Paynesville, Liberia, a photo of Central Elementary School students from Amherst County is among others scattered on the wall.

The "Wall of Wishes" at the Kids for Peace Health Clinic in the African country has images of various schools, including Central Elementary, that raised money in early 2019 as part of the Kind Coins for Liberia project to construct the clinic. The photo is of Central's 2018-19 second-grade class, who now are in third grade, for donating the most out of the Amherst school's \$100 donation.

Central Elementary did the Kind Coins fundraiser the last of week of January

2019 in tandem with The Great Kindness Challenge, an initiative sponsored by Kids For Peace, a nonprofit that provides youth with opportunities to spread kindness throughout the world and has launched more than 300 chapters.

This week the school is taking part in the 2020 Kind Coins for Mexico Campaign, a service project to raise money to help build a school and friendship center in Tijuana, Mexico.

Lauren Kershner, school counselor at Central Elementary, said the nonprofit

provides a free resource for the students to help spread kindness. In recent years the school has raised \$310 combined for outreaches to Kenya, Pakistan and hurricane relief efforts in the United States in 2018.

The Kindness Challenge includes a checklist that includes acts such as holding a door open for someone or giving a friend a high-five.

Kershner said she has shared with

SEE KINDNESS | A5

Looking for more Amherst County news, sports, wedding engagements and more? Check us out online at:



**Index**  
Calendar..... B4  
Classifieds..... B6  
Community..... B3  
Crossword..... B3  
Obituaries..... A5  
Opinion..... A4  
Sports..... B1

**Contact us at:**  
» Amherst New Era-Progress  
101 Wyndale Drive  
Lynchburg, VA 24501  
» Phone: (434) 385-5440  
» Email: editor@neweraprogress.com

**Classifieds**  
» Get the latest on places to rent, employment, auto sales and other announcements.  
**Page B6**



# Cell tower planned in Elon dealt a setback

Amherst County Planning Commission recommends denial of special exception

By Justin Faulconer  
jfaulconer@newsadvance.com

A 195-foot-tall cell tower Verizon Wireless proposes to install in the Elon area received a major setback with the Amherst County Planning Commission's unanimous recommendation for denial during its June 24 meeting.

The company is seeking a special exception to locate the tower of a 128-acre site zoned Agricultural Residential (A-1) at 801 Phyllis Lea Drive. More than a handful of neighboring property owners voiced opposition to the plan at a Feb. 20 public hearing on the grounds it disrupts their view of the scenic backdrop of Tobacco Row Mountain and threatens to negatively effect land values.

"This would definitely change the character of our area," said Greg FRESHOUR, who lives on nearby Kimberlea Road. "Property values, in my opinion and from what I researched, would be diminished ..."

Several residents were allowed to briefly address commissioners during the June 24 meeting and restated their opposition. One speaker referred to the planned tower as "a monster."

SEE TOWER | A3

# Rezoning for events venue gets OK from commission

Pannel has recommended approval of use for former church in Madison Heights

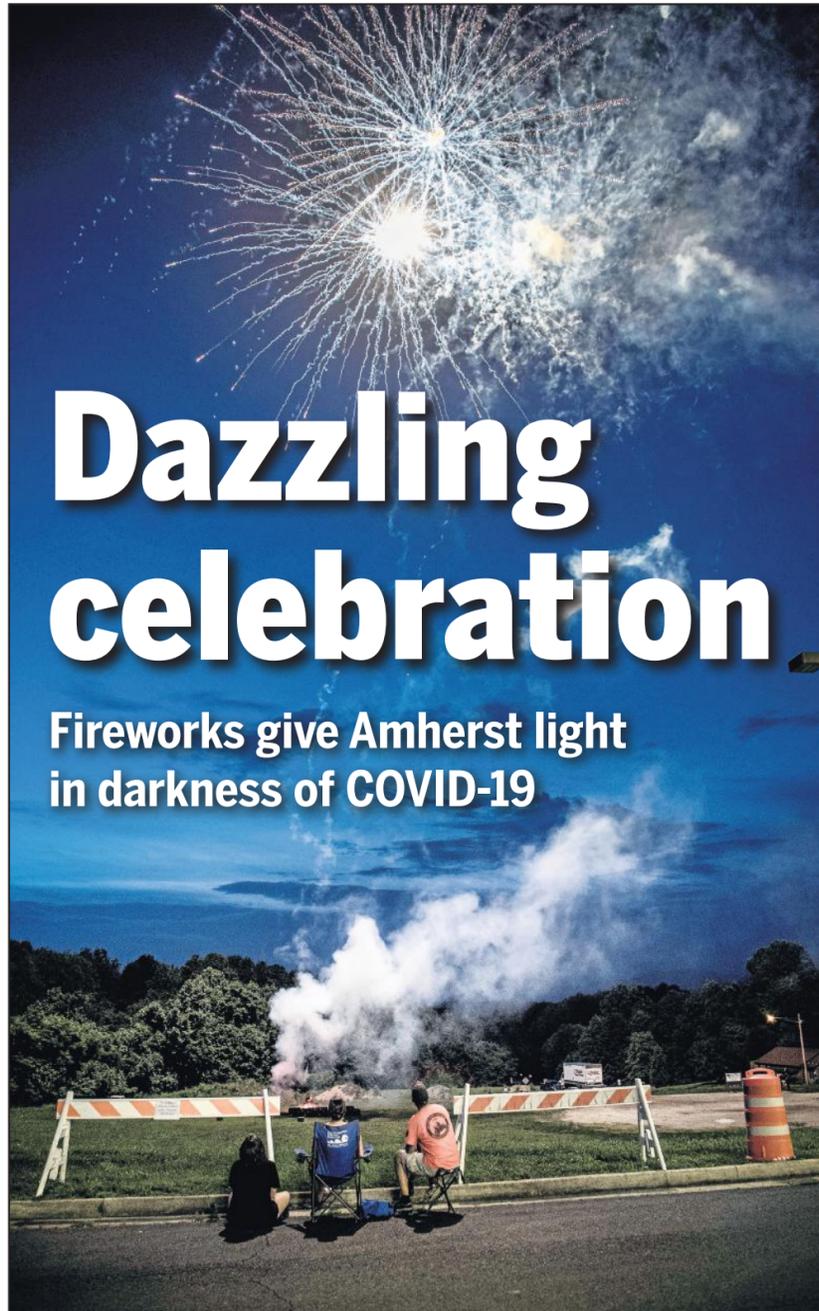
By Justin Faulconer  
jfaulconer@newsadvance.com

A special exception request to allow an event area for weddings, church retreats and other social gatherings in Madison Heights received a unanimous recommendation of approval from the Amherst County Planning Commission on June 24.

The application from Peter and Melanie Traber also seeks short-term rental of four existing cabins on the 15-acre parcel at 2554 Stapleton Road. The site also includes a former church, a single-family dwelling and a cemetery and is zoned A-1, or agricultural residential.

Melanie Traber told the commission the property is perfect for her family, as her two children are attending Liberty University, and the event venue will cater to gatherings of 25 to 50 people.

SEE VENUE | A2



Spectators watch the fireworks from behind barriers.

LEE LUTHER JR./FOR THE NEW ERA-PROGRESS

By Justin Faulconer  
jfaulconer@newsadvance.com

On his first trip out of Norfolk in several months to see friends, Chip Finch was among gatherers who enjoyed fireworks Saturday night from a grassy area near the Amherst traffic circle.

He had just dined at an Amherst restaurant for the first time since the novel coronavirus was declared a pandemic in the United States in March and was glad to see the show, which began shortly after 9 p.m. June 27. The trip with the added fireworks was a nice getaway, Finch said.

Several said they were pleased to have a distraction from the overall gloom of COVID-19, which along with disrupting everyday life and damaging the economy has put a stop to countless events, social gatherings and county traditions. Vehicles lined the CVS parking lot and other areas near the traffic circle on South Main Street as families and groups, encouraged by Amherst town officials to maintain social distancing protocols, looked up for a patriotic scene, its glow shining on their faces.

"People are happy to get out," said Karen Cobb, of Amherst. "This was a very nice show."

Amherst resident Edgar Kinnier also brought a chair for the display, soaking in the sights and sounds with a small group.

SEE FIREWORKS | A2

# Fireworks display, other July 3 festivities planned

By Justin Faulconer  
jfaulconer@newsadvance.com

A fireworks display and other Independence Day celebration festivities are planned at Winton Farm in Amherst from 6 to 9:30 p.m. Friday, July 3.

Dave McCormack, a developer whose company purchased the Winton country club and golf course at 599 Patrick Henry Highway in northern Amherst County, said the gathering is intended to lift spirits after several months of hardships from the COVID-19 pandemic.

"With all that's going on in the world right now, it's especially important to step back and reflect on what it really means to be American," McCormack said. "Independence Day isn't some stodgy historic holiday. It's the day we celebrate a concept that, unlike any other holiday, binds every single one of us in this country. To me, it's the most important holiday there is."

The Amherst County Agricultural



A safe distance was marked off before the fireworks show Saturday night in Amherst.

LEE LUTHER JR./FOR THE NEW ERA-PROGRESS

Committee recently voted to contribute \$2,000 toward the event. The money comes from a fund set aside for the Amherst County Fair, which was canceled this summer because of

COVID-19, and the county's board of supervisors unanimously signed off on it.

SEE WINTON | A2

Looking for more Amherst County news, sports, wedding engagements and more? Check us out online at:



Calendar..... A7  
Classifieds..... A8  
Community..... A7  
Crossword..... A7  
Opinion..... A4

**Contact us at:**  
» Amherst New Era-Progress  
101 Wyndale Drive  
Lynchburg, VA 24501  
» Phone: (434) 385-5440  
» Email: editor@neweraprogress.com

» Get the latest on places to rent, employment, auto sales and other announcements.  
**Page A8**



**EXPLORE VIRGINIA  
IN SPECIAL SECTION**

» INSIDE, B1-10



# AMHERST NEW ERA~PROGRESS

www.NewEraProgress.com

Amherst County's only hometown newspaper

**\$1**

Amherst, Va.

Vol. 138 - No. 31 / Two sections, 20 pages

Thursday, July 30, 2020

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

## Request denied for Elon area cell tower

Residents raised concerns at meeting of obstruction of scenic mountain views

By Justin Faulconer  
jfaulconer@newsadvance.com

A resident of Phyllis Lea Drive in the Elon area of Amherst County for nearly 33 years, Jewel Newman recalled her husband first seeing the road and declaring it "God's country."

Newman joined more than a handful of other residents during a July 21 public hearing before the Amherst County Board of Supervisors to strongly oppose a 195-foot-tall cell tower Verizon Wireless planned to locate at 801 Phyllis Lea Drive. Residents expressed concerns the tower would obstruct their scenic views of Tobacco Row Mountain and negatively affect land values.

The board voted against the company's special exception request 4-1, with Chairwoman Claudia Tucker voting for the tower.

Tucker said she has felt strongly about boosting broadband in rural areas since joining the board a decade ago and those efforts are more crucial than ever during the COVID-19 pandemic and increased distance learning. She said she has one of the best views in the county of Panther Mountain and she accepts a cell tower as part of it.

"I'm thankful I have access to broadband," said Tucker, a Lowesville area resident, adding she's grateful if her husband were injured in a farming accident she could quickly dial 911 on her cellphone.

The scenic mountain backdrop of Tobacco Row is what Newman said led her husband to call their home the most beautiful place he'd ever seen.

SEE TOWER | A2

## Resolution in support of gun rights is passed

Measure decries new laws passed by state legislature

By Justin Faulconer  
jfaulconer@newsadvance.com

Three weeks after controversial new state gun legislation took effect, Amherst County officials approved a resolution on July 21 stating the county will not prohibit legal possession of firearms and ammunition.

The unanimous vote came a day after the Appomattox County Board of Supervisors adopted such a measure expressing continued opposition to any laws restricting the second amendment.

Amherst and Appomattox counties were among more than 100 Virginia localities declaring themselves a "Second Amendment

SEE GUNS | A2

## RISING ABOVE THE HEAT AT MILL CREEK LAKE



Mill Creek Lake is in its first full summer as Amherst County's newest swimming spot. The Amherst County Board of Supervisors in September 2019 approved public swimming in the county park, which residents have taken full advantage of in the recent soaring temperatures. LEFT: A recent Saturday with temperatures in the 90's made for a perfect day for swimming at Mill Creek Lake. See more photos inside on page **A5**.

## Vacation bible school shifts to virtual teaching for Madison Heights church

Program finds new ways of outreach amid pandemic

By Justin Faulconer  
jfaulconer@newsadvance.com

In July many churches across Amherst County are buzzing with children's laughter, colorful props and spiritually enriching gatherings as part of vacation bible school.

However, the coronavirus pandemic has caused congregations to come up with creative ways this year to keep such activities going under unprecedented circumstances that largely affected in-person church activities.

Randolph Memorial Baptist Church for the first time in its history went to a virtual format for its traditional summertime outreach, said Derik



Jerry Fench, right, and his wife Connie pose with an inflatable whale as part of the Randolph Memorial Baptist Church virtual bible school centered on the Book of Jonah. Children came by during a July 24 event at the church, some having their photo taken with the whale.

LEE LUTHER JR./FOR THE NEW ERA-PROGRESS

Hamby, the church's pastor. Every Monday in July the church held virtual sessions with biblical lessons filmed on the James River, music and a craft activity.

Like many churches, Randolph Memorial Baptist on U.S. Business 29 in Madison

Heights has had to adapt the safety protocols to bring worshippers under its roof. Church gatherers adhere to the rule 6-foot social distance, wear masks and clean seating.

Embracing virtual ministry also has been a major tool, Hamby said. The church

records Wednesday night lessons online, holds Zoom sessions for Sunday school groups and streams services on its website while also holding in-person worship under the social distancing

SEE MINISTRY | A3

Online

Looking for more Amherst County news, sports, wedding engagements and more? Check us out online at:



Index

Calendar.....A9  
Classifieds.....A10  
Community.....A9  
Crossword.....A9  
Obituaries.....A5  
Opinion.....A4  
Sports.....A8

Contact us

**Contact us at:**  
» Amherst New Era-Progress  
101 Wyndale Drive  
Lynchburg, VA 24501  
» Phone: (434) 385-5440  
» Email: editor@neweraprogress.com

Classifieds

» Get the latest on places to rent, employment, auto sales and other announcements. **Page A10**

