

GREENE COUNTY RECORD



Boys basketball
defeats Fluvanna. **B1**

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THURSDAY, JANUARY 30, 2020

Residents air issues with fire & rescue

Meeting Monday was part of state study into Greene's fire & rescue operations

BY TERRY BEIGIE
Record Editor

Four people took advantage of the chance Monday night to tell the Virginia Fire Services Board study group how they think Greene County's fire and rescue departments are doing. There were roughly 40 people in the audience, most with ties to either the volunteer fire departments (there are three in Greene) or the rescue squad.

The three fire departments

in Greene County—Dyke, Ruckersville and Stanardsville—are all volunteer departments. The rescue squad operates as a hybrid with volunteers when it can and several shifts are covered by UVAs Medic 5.

"This is a great turnout, and I'm very excited to see this," said Melissa Meador, emergency services manager for the county. "The purpose of this study is to provide an objective view of the fire and EMS (emergency medical services) services in

Greene County; to provide feedback on areas where we are successful and in areas where we need improvement. We're not naïve. We know there are a lot of areas that this county needs to improve upon as far as fire and rescue."

The study, which was unanimously asked for last summer by the Greene County Board of Supervisors, is a free service for localities that request it. "We asked the study team to review several areas of responsibility

on the fire and rescue agencies," Meador said. "Those included organization, budget administration, accountability, training, level of service, delivery of services, fleet design and fleet management, communications, safety and operations. And we also asked them to take a look at our local emergency services board to determine whether or not that group needed to be more structured and be actually an extension of our governing body of the Board of Supervisors.

So, again, this is an opportunity where we want to hear from you, the good, the bad, the ugly, we want to hear it."

The first two speakers were in relation to an event that happened on Jan. 14 that left one of them within 20 minutes of her life.

The call to 911 was around 11:15 a.m. that day and an ambulance didn't arrive until 12:30 p.m. and it took another

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Author to discuss his story this weekend

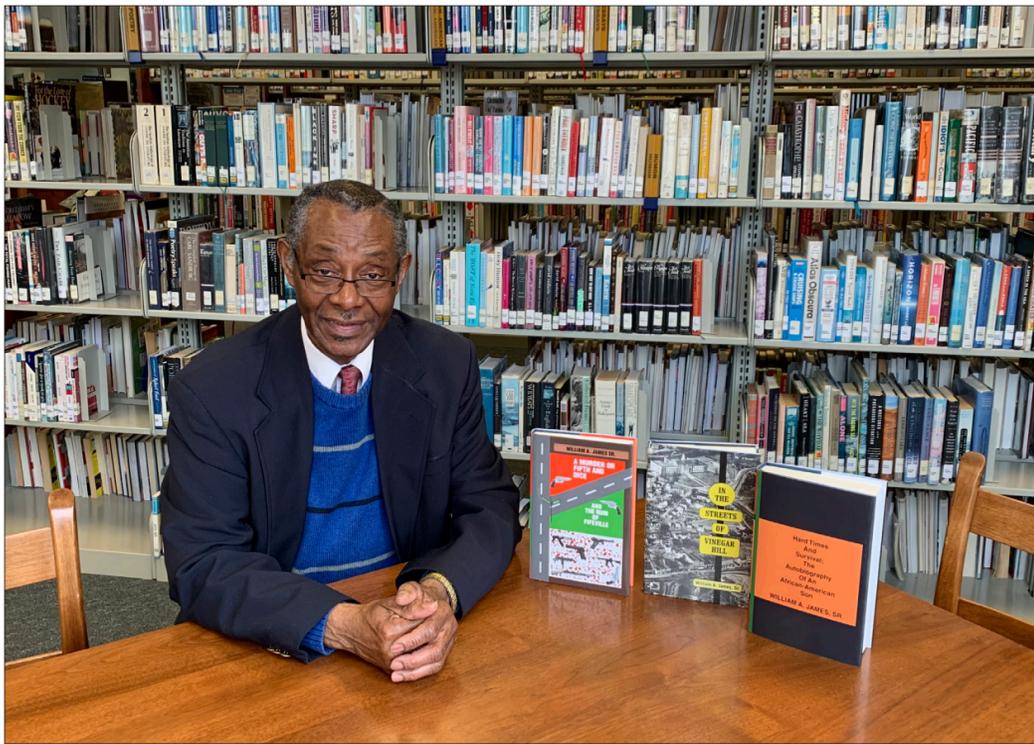


PHOTO BY TERRY BEIGIE/GREENE COUNTY RECORD

Greene County resident William James Sr. sits at Greene County Library, where he did research for two of his three published books. He will be speaking about one of his books this Saturday, Feb. 1 at 3 p.m.

BY TERRY BEIGIE
Record Editor

"There are brick walls in this world that you're going to run into," said Greene County resident and author William James Sr. "I don't care who you are, there will be things that you can do nothing about. You need to learn a way to go around it if you can."

At the Greene County Library this weekend, James will discuss his book "Hard Times and Survival: The Autobiography of an African-American Son," which is his story of an African-American child growing up in a segregated south and how he learned to persist.

"I'm grateful to Ms. Ginny Reese, the branch manager here at the Greene County Library for inviting me to participate in the beginning of the recognition of celebration of Black History Month," James said. "I'm also appreciative to many people here that

work under her for they have been instrumental in helping me find little pieces of information."

James, born in 1947, was beaten by his father while growing up in Fluvanna County and said he took refuge in books.

"Growing up, I had to invent ways to cope with that so that I could imagine that things were normal," he said. "I created within my mind, my psyche, what I now call a subliminal lockbox where I'll put everything bad that was going on. I forced it down into that imaginary place. I became an avid reader of whatever I could understand from the earliest age until I left home at 16 years old."

James made his way into Charlottesville at 16 years old in 1963 and saw the demolition of Vinegar Hill—an African-American neighborhood razed that year by eminent domain in the city—the following

See **AUTHOR**, Page A7

EDA discusses loan options and bonding opportunities

BY TERRY BEIGIE
Record Editor

The Greene County Economic Development Authority (EDA) has been working for the past month on the verbiage of its revolving loan (also called the small business loan) and its step loan (also known as site-readiness loan) programs. Additionally, the board has decided to look into whether it should facilitate bonding for organizations outside of Greene County.

At both the EDA work-session on Saturday, Jan. 11 and regular meeting on Tuesday, Jan. 21, the board went through the loan options in-depth.

"The old verbiage on the revolving loan

reflected a lot of work for Alan (Yost's) team and reflected a lot of old titles that no longer exist, like executive director," said Michael Payne, EDA chair.

The step loan, or as Yost suggested calling it a site-readiness loan, outlines the minimum and maximum loan amounts per step up and what is required to be shared with the board prior to approval.

"Step three was increased to \$100,000 based on Alan's assessment of what it would take to get a step three site in play," Payne said. "And really, that focuses on something that I hadn't thought of, which is cultural sensitivity. What happens if you run

into the graveyard on your property? So, again, we want to see contracts. This is an imminent strategy, you are moving forward. This is no longer speculative."

The changes to the revolving loan documents include the creation of a three-person loan review committee.

"Originally, it was the loan committee got to make a determination up to \$10,000," Payne said. "We discussed that we want the full board to approve any monies."

Matt Dillon asked whether the document required the committee to be unanimous in a loan's merits before it reached the full board.

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School board budget still up in the air

BY KATHLEEN BORRELLI
Record Staff

The Greene County School Board is facing hard choices for the fiscal year 2021 budget cycle—from the question of salary increases that were largely absent from the governor's budget in December to major restructuring coming to special education in the state, the board learned at its Jan. 22 meeting.

Dr. Andrea Whitmarsh, superintendent of schools, told the board the county can expect an increase in its Local Composite Index (LCI) which measures the amount the state feels the locality should shoulder for education costs. With the new biennium, the LCI has increased from 0.3321 to 0.3446 or 3.75%.

"Basically what that [LCI rate] says is that Greene County can afford to pay more locally its share of educating students," Whitmarsh said.

The county expects to receive rough-

ly the same in federal funding year over year of \$1.9 million, though Whitmarsh noted that this funding is earmarked for specific programs and cannot be used in other ways.

According to Gov. Ralph Northam's state budget proposal, fiscal 2020 state budget funding was roughly \$62,000 less than the board approved early last year. Much of the state funding is allocated to specific categories, which apparently do not include raises to teachers' salaries in the first year of the biennium.

"The governor has proposed a 3% compensation supplement but only in year two of the biennium and only for (Standards of Quality) funded positions," Whitmarsh said. Standards of Quality (SOQ) positions are the bare minimum staff required. During the fiscal year 2020 budget discussions, Whitmarsh said the county had 272 employees considered SOQ and 195 who are not.

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GREENE COUNTY RECORD



RES teachers visit students in drive-by style. B1

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THURSDAY, APRIL 2, 2020

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

“Pat a farmer on the back”

Ag industry continues to face tough times with COVID-19

BY TERRY BEIGIE
Record Editor

Even before the novel coronavirus popped onto the scene, things hadn't been easy for agriculture producers. Many dairy farms have shuttered, the United States has been in a trade war with China since summer 2018, there have been numerous natural disasters—from deadly tornadoes to wildfires to flooding—all taking a toll on producers' bottom line and health.

Forced quarantines and business closures due to COVID-19, formally called SARS-CoV2, are impacting local farmers in myriad ways.

“The biggest thing that has happened to the industry is the markets have absolutely tumbled across all segments of

agriculture,” said Steve Catalano, a local farmer and agriculture hauler. “Some of that was due to the trade war that just got ironed out. There were promises of many, many million tons of purchase by merchants from China, and they got COVID first.”

Catalano said producers have been waiting for the trade war to get ironed out, and President Donald Trump signed a deal in mid-January.

“I think we were all really hoping that we could turn a corner when that deal was signed, but it's been nothing but a waterslide ever since,” Catalano said. “We do have a lot more strong domestic demand than usual, at least for wheat, so there are a few bright spots. Corn has really gone down from COVID and the oil war; ethanol plants are shut off



FILE PHOTO

because it's well below their profit margin to operate.”

Greene County School Board Vice

See AG, Page A5

COVID-19 RESOURCES

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH: info on coronavirus prevention and reporting. www.vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus

FEEDING GREENE INC: food bank in Greene County. www.feedinggreeneinc.org

GREENE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE: info for local businesses. www.greencoc.org

VIRGINIA FARM BUREAU: finances, mental health and more. www.vafb.com

GREENE COUNTY: links to departments & livestream of meetings. www.greencountyva.gov

GREENE SCHOOLS: information for parents & students. www.greencountyschools.com

SHERIFF: www.greencountysheriffva.com

VA TOURISM: information for tourism businesses. www.vatc.org/cv19businessresources

Adjustments due to COVID-19 in county

From Staff Reports

The Greene County government continues to make adjustments to operations amid the coronavirus crisis. After the Thomas Jefferson Health District announced the confirmed case of COVID-19 on Thursday, March 26, the county released new closure notifications for government offices in Greene.

The county canceled public use of the county administration building as a meeting space for community groups and organizations until further notice, according

to a release from county administration.

The Board of Supervisors voted at its meeting on Tuesday, March 24 to allow the board, planning commission or any other public body to conduct meetings solely electronically during the duration of the local emergency, not to exceed six months.

Gov. Ralph Northam announced a state emergency on Thursday, March 12 and President Donald Trump announced a national emergency mid-day on Friday, March

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Northam: Stay at home

BY MEL LEONOR
AND JUSTIN MATTINGLY
Richmond Times-Dispatch

RICHMOND — Gov. Ralph Northam on Monday ordered Virginia residents to remain at home except for certain necessities, stepping up the state's restrictions on public activity to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

The order — which went into effect Monday and will remain in place until June 10 — allows people to leave their homes if they “must go out for food, supplies, medical care, or to get fresh air or exercise,” Northam said during a news conference. The order also allows

people to travel to work, places of worship and child care providers and for volunteering, caretaking and to seek social services.

“You should stay home to the greatest extent possible,” Northam said.

The order comes as the number of COVID-19 cases continues to climb in Virginia, where 1,020 people have tested positive for the virus. On Monday, the Virginia Department of Health reported 130 new cases of COVID-19 and that the state death toll was up to 25. So far, 12,038 people have been tested in Virginia.

Unlike the stay-at-home order Maryland

Gov. Larry Hogan issued Monday, which can lead to jail time and a fine, Northam's order does not carry a civil or criminal penalty.

Without a means for enforcement, the order simply brings Virginia's messaging more in line with that of neighboring states like Maryland and North Carolina, while adding clarity to what the state deems an essential outing.

The directive is a change for Northam, who on Friday said there was virtually no difference between issuing an order and his ongoing requests for people to stay at home except when it's necessary to leave.

“We're talking semantics here,” he said Friday.

On Monday — after a weekend of warm weather that attracted crowds to the state's public spaces — Northam said many people had not heeded the call for distancing, prompting his more aggressive message.

Northam said the sight of the crowds, amid anecdotes of health care professionals grappling with the disease in strained hospitals, became personal for the former U.S. Army physician.

“They are sacrificing their time. They're sacrificing perhaps their health,

See NORTHAM, Page A3

Buildings are closed, but church isn't

BY KATHLEEN BORRELLI
Record Staff

With the governor's latest ban on gatherings of more than 10 people to help combat the spread of the COVID-19 virus, many area churches have been forced to close their doors, but that doesn't mean church is out-of-session.

Pastor Greg Payne of Nortonville Church of God said that “challenging times have produced creative times for the church. We started an online service on Facebook and Instagram called NCOG Live; based on the number of views, we actually ministered to far more people (this) Sunday than on a typical Sunday service.”

Some churches have either held a drive-through church service or were planning on doing it, but after Gov. Ralph Northam's stay-at-home order it's unclear if that will happen.

“Church has never been



COURTESY PHOTO

Pastor Greg Payne of Nortonville Church of God works on his online service.

about a building,” he said. “Instead it's all about relationships. It's been inspiring watching our church family rise to the occasion. They have been calling each other, encouraging each other and praying.”

In the time when people seem to need prayers the most, Payne wants his congregants to know the church is still there for them.

“The recent challenges and disappointments do not sur-



PHOTO BY KATHLEEN BORRELLI/GREENE COUNTY RECORD

Pastor Pat Kelliher greeted Evergreen Church of the Brethren congregants from a safe distance in the church parking lot Sunday morning.

prise God; he is in control. God will see us through, and I truly believe we will be stronger after this. This is our opportunity to

show God's love and to do good deeds,” he said.

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GREENE COUNTY RECORD



Celebrate Hanukkah virtually during the pandemic. **B1**

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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2020

Woman died by gunshot in Greene Dec. 1

BY TERRY BEIGIE
Record Editor

A 21-year-old Charlottesville woman died by an apparent gunshot wound in Greene County on Tuesday, Dec. 1, according to the Greene County Sheriff's Office. The call for emergency medical service was dispatched at approximately 12:15 a.m. to the home in the 7000 block of Celt Road.

Sheriff Steve Smith said he's not able to offer specifics on the situation, but did say a juvenile who is a person of interest in the case has been arrested on unrelated charges. The investigation is continuing into the Dec. 1 incident, he said.

In a brief statement given to the press last week, Smith said he believed this to be an isolated incident.

Anyone with information is asked to call Investigator Scott Murphy or Lt. Kevin Freid at (434) 985-2222. If the death is ruled a homicide it will be the county's first this year and second since 2018.

Swenson steps down at GRACE

BY TERRY BEIGIE
Record Editor

After nine years as the executive director of the Greene Alliance of Church/Community Efforts (GRACE), Doris Swenson is retiring and GRACE needs someone to stand at the helm in its mission to help residents.

"Rhonda Oliver had been director since 2005 when GRACE opened and in 2011 she needed to step down," Swenson said. "I took over as director in July 2011, so there have been only two directors in its history."

GRACE assists people who are either below or just above the poverty level, Swenson said. Everyone who works for GRACE is a volunteer.

"We can't afford to pay people and I wish we could because that would open up the pool to a bigger selection of people," Swenson said. "But, we just can't."

GRACE helps people in need in a myriad of ways—from helping with overdue utility bills to covering rent



PHOTO BY TERRY BEIGIE/GREENE COUNTY RECORD

Doris Swenson has been at the helm of the Greene Alliance of Church/Community Efforts (GRACE) for nine years. She's stepping down from the role of executive director later this month.

or medications for a client. Additionally, the group puts together household and hygiene item bags for its cli-

ents to help offset the cost of the items, which cannot be purchased using food stamps.

"The goal of GRACE is to empower residents by offer-

See **GRACE**, Page A7

Dragon Dojo offers socially distant instruction

BY KATHLEEN BORRELLI
Staff Writer

Stanardsville mother of two Christine Kaiser had been looking for a fun and safe physical activity to keep the girls active while helping relieve some of the stress of 2020. Thanks to one local teacher, Nathanael Greene Elementary School second-grader Maren, 7, who struggles with ADHD, has found a new passion this fall: karate.

"I used to do martial arts when I was younger and I figured maybe we would try it out because it's especially good for her ADHD and she also has sensory issues," Kaiser said. "The weights, punching things and kicking things feels good to her—it helps her—so I decided to enroll her and she's been loving it. She has her own little karate gi that she wears and she gets all excited putting it on."

Greene Dragon Dojo

was started as an official Greene County Parks and Recreation activity in late August by William Monroe High School special education teacher and martial artist Shannon Frye.

"Shannon is very understanding; he's very patient," Kaiser said. "He clearly knows how to teach and work with kids; he knows when they need a break and they need to run around the field. He's very good with coming up with alternative meth-

ods to get their feet in the right place, because my daughter is kind of challenged sometimes to (understand) ... he brought out circles so she knew where to put her feet."

Shannon Frye teaches special education and works with autistic children at William Monroe High School, and his wife Alicia Frye is a special education teacher at Nathanael Greene Primary School. Shannon has been studying vari-

ous forms of martial arts since he was 12.

"I've been in various martial arts for about 38 years now," Frye said. "Before moving to Greene, I ran a community outreach martial arts program in Chesapeake for 15 years. When I moved here, I propositioned Parks and Rec with doing the martial arts program ... and they kind of shot it down because they didn't have a location (indoors) so it would have to be at the park and if it rained

you'd get rained on. That didn't sound good under normal conditions."

While the idea of a rain-or-shine outdoor class wasn't terribly appealing in 2018, things are looking very different in 2020 with the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing restrictions on all group gatherings.

"Here we are two years later—there's nothing going on, everybody's crazy, and COVID ... and

See **KARATE**, Page A8

PE adapts to new learning patterns

BY KATHLEEN BORRELLI
Staff Writer

With all the stress and uncertainty of life during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is more important than ever to get fresh air and exercise as often as possible. Greene County PE teachers are finding new ways to keep kids active this year while social distancing.

"This year is no different in that students need and greatly benefit from physical activity during their school day, whether in person or virtually," said Ruckersville Elementary School PE teacher Stacey Powdrell. "It helps combat stress, gives their brains a break and stretches out their bodies. Yes, we've had to make some changes to the way we are doing PE this year, but that's what we're trained to do as educators—reflect, adapt and modify."

The PE teachers at all five schools have found ways to modify their activities to allow for social distancing among participants.

"I started with organizing the physical gym space," Powdrell said. "Instead of using what we've called 'Eagle dots' in past years, I created 'Eagle nests' that were 6 by 6 and 10 feet apart, using floor tape. Each student has their own nest to stay in. I've also made equipment adjustments, whether it's making sure we have enough for each individual student, implementing a used and unused pile instead of sharing, or switching the type of equipment; pool noodles have been a lifesaver as they allow us to play some of the old games they love while helping to maintain the distance requirements."

In addition to in-person

See **PE**, Page A6



COURTESY PHOTO

William Monroe Middle School PE teacher Katie Marshall demonstrates cardio drumming, a fun rhythm and cardio activity they have incorporated this year thanks to a shipment of new PE equipment.

36 businesses in Greene got CARES grants

BY TERRY BEIGIE
Record Editor

Thirty-six businesses in Greene County received a total of \$260,897 in grants this year through the county's Economic Development Authority (EDA) to mitigate the effects of the coronavirus pandemic.

The Greene County Board of Supervisors in June approved \$300,000 from the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act dollars for this purpose. The county received two \$1.7 million tranches of funding from the act—one in June and the other in September.

Grants were awarded in \$25,000, \$10,000 or \$5,000 increments. Because the amount of the grant could not exceed the amount of the business's

See **CARES**, Page A8

