

The Farmville Herald

Honor for the past, help for the present, hope for the future

Farmville, Virginia

Friday, May 8, 2020

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Citizens discuss plans to reopen

BY ALEXA MASSEY
The Farmville Herald

Virginia Gov. Ralph S. Northam presented a timeline Monday, May 4, to gradually reopen the commonwealth beginning May 15, but many area residents are wary of things going back to normal too quickly. Executive Order 53 went

into effect Tuesday, March 25, closing businesses such as barbershops, retail shops and gyms. The order also restricted restaurants to delivery and takeout services only. On Monday, Northam extended the order to expire May 14, at which point the state is anticipating a move into Phase 1 of its 10- to 12-week reopening process.

Holly Pleasants, 21, of Cumberland, said reopening the state is a hard situation to judge. "We don't really know what is going to happen until it is happening. But I do think that it may be time to start trying to recover economically," she said. "With everyone being out of work, it's already hard on everyone, and only getting

harder the longer that is the case." Pleasants has a 4-month-old at home and said she and her baby may remain home for a while and observe how the reopening process progresses. She's aware that other family members may not have that choice. "My husband is the assistant manager at Joseph A. Bank

and his job requires him to measure people and fit them for suits, which is not something he can do from 6 feet apart. He has to pretty much be right in their personal space to properly do his job. So I'm not sure when his job will be able to open up in these phases, but we're

See **REOPEN**, Page A8



TITUS MOHLER | HERALD

A new mural, celebrating caregivers during the COVID-19 pandemic, spans part of a fence outside Centra Southside Community Hospital in Farmville. The mural was designed by Claire Utzinger, a senior art major at Valparaiso University who was set to take the lead on a mural project at school, but the pandemic prevented that from happening. "So this was a really great opportunity for me to be able to lead this mural project for people who are obviously very deserving," she said. Together with her mother Joy Utzinger and her sister Eve Utzinger, Claire spent 15-16 hours this past weekend painting the mural.

Imagine Farmville Future of health care

BY EMILY HOLLINGSWORTH
Special to The Farmville Herald

At the start of a new decade, the Farmville area and the world are being hit with a pandemic, the outbreak of the novel coronavirus, that is unlike anything that has occurred in a century and for most peoples' lives.

As of Wednesday, May 6, in Virginia, there were 19,357 confirmed and 899 probable cases of COVID-19. There have been 690 confirmed and an additional 23 probable deaths stemming from COVID-19 complications, according to data from the Virginia Department of Health.

Health is many peoples' top priority. Hospitals, practitioners and health care workers are using all of their resources to treat those who are hospitalized and inform people about ways they can protect themselves and others.

This first installment of the Imagine Farmville series explores how health care workers and facilities are faring during the COVID-19 pandemic, looks

back into the recent and distant past to understand the evolutions and challenges health care facilities and community members faced and speaks with officials about the work they are doing to create a future where health care continues to be more accessible and prepares for the uncertainties that may lie ahead.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

The sound of sirens pierced the air the morning of April 23 at Centra Southside Community Hospital (CSCH). It wasn't a signal of alarm or of an emergency, but of hope.

A procession of decorated vehicles, trucks and buses followed ambulances and a few emergency vehicles, many carrying signs of encouragement for health care workers.

The Health Care Heroes parade, developed by members of the community, was an outpouring of support toward people on the frontlines during the coronavirus pandemic in Farmville.

"There were very few dry eyes

in the house after this event," CSCH Community Engagement and Relations Coordinator Kerry Mossler said in an interview.

"Our caregivers felt so very appreciated and proud to be a part of this community," Mossler said. "I cannot say 'thank you' enough to all of those involved with that event — it was one of the most moving tributes that I have been a part of during my health care career."

In addition, health care employees have received an outpouring of personal protective equipment (PPE) and hand-made fabric facemasks, Mossler said. YakAttack in Prince Edward built Powered Air-Purifying Respirator (PAPR) shields for health care workers to use.

As community members and organizations transformed concern, fear and resources into support during the parade, health care practitioners in the area are working to do the same.

As of Wednesday, May 6, according to the Virginia

See **FUTURE**, Page A2

Majority of inmates are asymptomatic

BY ALEXA MASSEY
The Farmville Herald

BUCKINGHAM

As the number of Dillwyn Correctional Center (DCC) employees who have tested positive for the coronavirus increases, Buckingham County Emergency Management Coordinator Cody Davis said he believes

the prisons will be able to keep the outbreak contained and out of the general population of the county.

Virus cases in the county reported by the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) are still

See **INMATES**, Page A7

YMCA to open May 15

The Southside Virginia Family YMCA announced that it plans to reopen its facilities in phases beginning May 15.

Officials noted in a Wednesday, May 6, press release that while details are still being ironed out, Phase 1 will begin Friday, May 15, under the guidance of the State Alliance of YMCAs, the national YMCA and in accordance with the best practices that have been provided by the governor's office.

See **YMCA**, Page A5



Southside Virginia Family YMCA Child Care Director Cristen Given helps clean the wellness center to get things ready for members.

Board adopts budgets with changes

BY TITUS MOHLER
The Farmville Herald

PRINCE EDWARD

The Prince Edward County Board of Supervisors adopted the Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21) county and school budgets with some changes and passed the resolution for the Calendar Year 2020 tax rates with no changes Tuesday, May 5.

The board voted unanimously to cut some money from the Prince Edward County Public Schools (PEPCS) budget due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has closed the schools. Board Chairman and

See **CHANGES**, Page A5

Bartlett's contract extended

BY TITUS MOHLER
The Farmville Herald

PRINCE EDWARD

The Prince Edward County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously Tuesday, May 5, to extend County Administrator Wade Bartlett's contract by three months.

His contract with the county, originally set to expire June 30, will now end Sept. 30.

"I wanted Mr. Bartlett's contract to be extended three months in order to ensure that we have an appropriate amount of time to seek applicants for the position of county administrator," Board Chairman and Leigh District Supervisor Jerry R. Townsend said,

See **CONTRACT**, Page A8



Wade Bartlett



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FUTURE: 'We could use the COVID crisis to accelerate work ...'

FROM PAGE ONE

Department of Health, 58 confirmed cases had been reported in Prince Edward County. There had been five reported hospitalizations and two deaths. Prevention has been key for health care professionals in the region. CSCH, clinics and numerous health care practices are taking precautions and innovating their practices to protect and provide care to patients.

CSCH established a 15-bed COVID-19 unit for suspected/positive COVID-infected patients that can be rapidly expanded to 46 beds, Mossler said. Those rooms have been converted to negative pressure, an air circulation method that prevents the virus from spreading as health care workers go from room to room.

Drive-by testing is also available at the hospital. CSCH was the second hospital in Virginia to begin administering drive-by testing, Mossler said.

Following Gov. Ralph Northam's executive order to lift the restriction on elective surgeries, CSCH has begun enabling elective surgeries to take place beginning Monday, May 4, Mossler said, giving COVID-19 testing to patients scheduled for an elective surgery.

Centra Medical Group (CMG) has begun giving telehealth appointments to patients to practice social distancing.

Tammy Wingo, family nurse practitioner and founder of Hope Clinic of Farmville, is providing masks to patients who may not have them, and care to patients in the parking lot who may be too unwell to enter the office.

"Life has changed quite a bit," Wingo said.

For those with suspected symptoms of COVID-19, Wingo directs them to CSCH for care. The clinic is also distributing PPE such as masks, face shields and sanitizer to other medical practices in the area.

"We don't want to take away PPE from people who need it," Wingo said.

In addition to caring for people during the present circumstances, practitioners are also looking toward the future, seeking to enact solutions that make health care more accessible to the community and remedy the challenges residents of the Farmville area face when receiving health care.

'TRYING TO THINK DIFFERENTLY ABOUT ... OUR FUTURE'

During a teleconference Thursday, April 30, Centra CEO Dr. Andy Mueller said Centra's health care approach may be more innovative post-pandemic.

"There's no doubt we could use the COVID crisis to accelerate work that we knew we needed to do," Mueller said.

Prior to the pandem-

ic, Mueller said Centra had not yet invested in a robust telemedicine platform. In the span of weeks, he said the hard work of employees enabled Centra to quickly and effectively provide that service to patients.

"That's not going to go away," Mueller said about virtual appointments. "If patients find that that's convenient and we can safely deliver care ... then we're going to continue to do that."

He said Centra will continue to prioritize care for patients who need or want to see their physicians face to face.

"Ultimately, at the end of the day, as we talked about within the organization, we believe our just cause is partnering with you to live your best life," Mueller said.

In line with providing in-person care, Wingo said many of her patients do not have access or experience with technology that would allow for virtual appointments. In addition, there are some pockets of the region without broadband access.

Wingo said the innovation health care professionals are taking on is necessary for the health of the patients.

"Whatever you have to do to adapt (in order) to meet these needs, that's what you have to do," Wingo said. "COVID-19 has made that self-evident."

Mueller said the pandemic has also forced Centra's internal staff to consider different operating methods.

For example, he said in the past there would be organization-wide meetings where hundreds would travel to a central location. The process was often time-consuming.

"Those are some of the things we're not going to go back to after COVID-19," Mueller said.

He noted holding those meetings remotely has proven to be a better use of resources and has received more positive feedback from staff.

"We are really trying to think differently about what our future looks like," he said.

The health care future of Farmville could be one where people could access doctors and receive medical care through the internet, without having to leave home. The implementation of telehealth appointments may have the potential to slow the spread of flu or other communicable diseases. To reach this future, a number of challenges facing medical practices and community members must be addressed.

HEALTH CARE CHALLENGES

These challenges are reflected in the Farmville Area Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) developed by Centra and a team of community partners that included area non-profit leaders. The assessment was developed in large part from a survey sent out to residents in the

Farmville region who voiced their experiences. The assessment and implementation plan can be found at www.centrahealth.com/CHNA.

According to the assessment and implementation plan, developed in 2018 and adopted in the spring of 2019, there were 920 participants who filled out the health care needs survey. Of the 920 from the seven-county area CSCH serves and elsewhere, 34.9% of the respondents reported residing in Prince Edward County/Town of Farmville.

In response to the assessment question – what do you feel prevents you from getting the services

you need? – 48.9% of respondents cited cost as a reason. Other reasons included high co-pay costs (32.68%), long waits for appointments (23.99%), lack of weekend and evening services (23.35%), lack of transportation (13.88%), lack of internet access (10.77%), not liking going to the doctor (10.12%), and not trusting doctors/clinics (3.24%).

The overall health of the region, involving numerous health factors, was also surveyed. To rank the overall health of counties in Virginia, the CHNA used the framework for the County Health Rankings from the University of Wisconsin Population

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The Farmville Herald

Honor for the past, help for the present, hope for the future

Farmville, Virginia

Friday, May 15, 2020

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William Taylor Hale Mottley

Man charged with murder

William Taylor Hale Mottley, 28, of Cumberland, was arrested in the early hours of Tuesday morning, May 12, for the murder of another man four days prior.

According to a release from the Amelia County Sheriff's Office, Tuesday, May 12, at approximately 4:30 a.m. the Amelia County Sheriff's Office, with the assistance of the Cumberland County Sheriff's Office, Prince

Edward County Sheriff's Office, Virginia State Police and the U.S. Marshal's Office, arrested Mottley on Germantown Road in Prince Edward County.

The release stated he was arrested without incident for the shooting death of 31-year-old Kaleb Ross Hart May 9.

Mottley is being charged with capital murder, robbery and use of a firearm in commis-

sion of a felony.

The investigation is still ongoing and future updates may be provided as they become available.

Anyone with any information on this crime or any crime in Amelia are encouraged to contact the sheriff's office at (804) 561-2118 or the Amelia Crime Solvers at (804) 561-5200.

Imagine Farmville

Future of county economy

BY EMILY HOLLINGSWORTH
Special to The Farmville Herald

This week the Imagine Farmville series looks into the possible future of economic development and the initiatives that Prince Edward County is currently taking to vitalize existing businesses and recruit new industries.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused uncertainty for business operations and employees. Those who work in the retail, construction, service or cre-

ative industries have had to quickly adapt to shifting protocols to keep people at a safe distance and slow the spread of illness.

Millions in the U.S. have been unemployed. Residents in Prince Edward and Farmville are no exception to recent unemployment.

As Prince Edward County and businesses in the region combat immediate challenges and uncertainties, their vision for the future remains consistent: keep businesses viable,

keep people employed and seek out industries that could thrive in the county.

RAPIDLY CHANGING ECONOMY

Bringing in new business has been a longstanding point of discussion in the county. Last summer, a resident of Farmville started a petition for an area ALDI grocery store on Change.org. The petition generated more than 2,900 signatures. New business has come

See **ECONOMY**, Page A5



TITUS MOHLER | HERALD

This photo shows a roadside view of part of the 280 acres Prince Edward County purchased for \$1.5 million with the intent of drawing data centers to locate there.

County aims for data centers

BY TITUS MOHLER
The Farmville Herald

PRINCE EDWARD

The Prince Edward County Board of Supervisors allocated \$1.5 million to the Prince Edward County Industrial Development Authority (IDA) for the purchase of property suited for a data center site, the county announced in a Tuesday, May 12, press release.

Officials stated in the release that data centers have the

potential to generate high tax revenues and high-paying jobs, along with many other positive indirect impacts on the local economy.

"Data centers have become critical infrastructure to the operation of our daily lives as a society, especially during this COVID-19 pandemic, where

See **CENTERS**, Page A2

DCC inmate dies

BY ALEXA MASSEY
The Farmville Herald

BUCKINGHAM

The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) listed Buckingham County as having 347 positive coronavirus cases Wednesday, May 13, making it the county with the second-most cases relative to its population in all of Virginia.

Meanwhile, the second death in the county came Tuesday in the form of a Dillwyn Correctional Center (DCC) inmate.

The passing of the DCC offender marked the second death of an inmate in the county after the Virginia Department of Corrections (VADOC) reported one death

from the Buckingham Correctional Center (BKCC) earlier last week.

For the first time in weeks, cases reported by VDH outnumber the cases reported in Buckingham's two correctional facilities.

VADOC on Wednesday reported 205 positive inmates, eight positive staff, five hospitalized offenders and one inmate dead at DCC as a result of the virus.

BKCC was listed Wednesday as having 75 positive inmates, five positive staff and five offenders hospitalized with one death.

See **INMATE**, Page A3

Town elections are May 19

BY CRYSTAL VANDEGRIFT
The Farmville Herald

The May general and special elections are set for Tuesday, May 19, following a two-week postponement by Gov. Ralph Northam due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Candidates on the May 19 town ballot are — Member Town Council At-Large - Daniel Edward Dwyer, who is an incumbent, and Carl U. Eggleston.

Member Town Council Ward D - Donald L. Hunter. Hunter is an incumbent and running unopposed.

Member Town Council Ward E - Sallie Overton Amos. Amos is seeking the seat currently held by Jamie Davis. Davis is not seeking reelection.



Daniel Edward Dwyer

FARMVILLE

Lynette Wright, director of elections for Prince Edward County, is encouraging voters to protect their health during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Absentee ballots returned by mail must be



Carl U. Eggleston

received by the local general registrar by 7 p.m. on Election Day, May 19. The deadline for asking for an absentee ballot was Tuesday, May 12.

Only individuals who were eligible to vote May 5 may participate in the elections May 19.

Pay cuts announced

BY ALEXA MASSEY
The Farmville Herald

Longwood University officials announced Tuesday, May 12, the university will be asking faculty and staff to take pay cuts over the coming year in an attempt to avoid layoffs due to the financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In a release distributed by the university's Office of Public Relations, officials noted Longwood employees will see temporary pay reductions averaging 6.5%, with the percentage reductions for most employees ranging from 5.7% to 7%.

The move is an attempt to prevent the extensive staff reductions that have taken place at other universities during the outbreak.

The release noted the pay cuts are tiered to have the least impact on those with the lowest salaries. Additionally, a small number of senior university leaders will take salary reduc-



W. Taylor Reveley IV

LONGWOOD

tions of 15%. University vice presidents will take reductions of 20%. Longwood President W. Taylor Reveley IV will take a pay cut of 25%.

Longwood University employs a total of 765 people.

Staff members will be awarded unpaid time off in return for decreased paid hours.

The university will continue

See **CUTS**, Page A10



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Public comments reinstated

BY ALEXA MASSEY
The Farmville Herald

BUCKINGHAM

The Buckingham Board of Supervisors (BOS) voted unanimously Monday, May 11, to reinstate the board meeting public comments previously suspended in an emergency ordinance. In an emergency BOS

meeting held Tuesday, March 31, the board passed a Continuity of Government Ordinance in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, with a majority of the board also voting to temporarily suspend public comments at regular meetings during

the emergency declaration. While the public has since been able to submit comments on specific public hearings taken place at the board meetings via email, letter or voicemail, residents were not able to present their general thoughts, grievances and suggestions to the board by

way of an official public comment section during the suspension. In March, County Administrator Rebecca Carter said the restriction on comments aimed to limit the length of meetings during the emergency declaration. On Monday night, Carter told the board

various members of the public had been upset by the initial decision to suspend the comments. Some residents felt the temporary removal was a violation of their rights to submit comments to the board. Carter let the supervisors know they could vote to reinstate the public comments if they felt inclined to. District 4 Supervisor Thomas Jordan Miles III made the motion to

reinstate the comments, which was seconded by District 3 Supervisor and Vice Chairman Don Matthews. Miles was the only supervisor to vote no to the initial removal of the comments back in March. Although citizens cannot physically attend board meetings, public comments may be submitted by paper or electronic means.

ECONOMY: We need more than temporary solutions

FROM PAGE ONE

to the area within the year. At the end of 2018, YakAttack, a leading manufacturer of kayak fishing supplies, opened in Prince Edward County at the STEPS Centre on Industrial Park Road.

The opening of the manufacturing plant would lead to 34 new jobs. During the coronavirus pandemic, YakAttack employees used their supplies and equipment to build powered air-purifying respirator (PAPR) shields for healthcare workers in the region.

Residents recently expressed excitement and discussion ensued on social media when a drive-thru Starbucks was announced on May 4 to open on South Main Street in the fall.

While some businesses are developing or continuing operation, the challenges businesses face by limiting in-person interaction has damaged businesses, causing their futures to be uncertain. Some have had to make difficult decisions to reduce staff or close for good.

Ruby Tuesday, which employed 50 people, permanently closed in April. Of the 50 employees 42 are residents of the Farmville region.

In another past report, YakAttack has reported reducing staff based on slowing of business due to the coronavirus.

According to data from the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC), 128 residents in Prince Edward filed initial unemployment claims during the week of May 2. The highest rate of claims occurred the week of March 28, where 255 residents filed initial unemployment claims. Since the pandemic, more than 1,000 Prince Edward workers have filed for unemployment.

During a time where the economy and peoples' livelihoods are shifting at a breakneck pace, individuals and organizations seek to provide solutions and reassurance that there is hope to be had. Yet uncertainty and fear of job shortages remain a reality.

'IT'S BEEN QUIET'

Chris Senger, the former general manager of RubyTuesday, has been unemployed for three weeks. He has kept in touch with most of his team, most of the full-time staff who worked at Ruby Tuesday.

For many of the employees he knows who make minimum wage, he said the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) Act has made an impact on residents. For those who have received a stimulus check or is receiving unemployment, he said some are earning more than they had working

full time.

Many of his team members, he said, may not start looking for a job until the end of the summer. But for him and many of the staff members he keeps in contact with, the future may be bleak.

Senger said in a Tuesday interview that the lack of dine-in opportunities with restaurants could shift how restaurants operate long-term. He said there were initially 50 people who worked at Ruby Tuesday. If he were to open a Ruby Tuesday now, he said he may only hire 30 people.

"[Restaurants] aren't going to hire the staff they needed three months ago," Senger said. As more people become unemployed and fewer positions are becoming available, he said the job market is becoming increasingly competitive.

He said he has applied for multiple jobs within a 90-mile radius: which includes Richmond, Lynchburg and Charlottesville. He has had 14 years of experience in the restaurant industry with 10 of those years being in management. He said he hasn't received a callback or interview. He said even applying for positions he would have been overqualified for have turned up empty.

Senger lives with his wife, has a child and has another child on the way. He said he will have to consider large lifestyle changes rather quickly, including potentially selling a vehicle or looking at different housing.

"I'm one of millions in that same predicament," Senger said.

He said outside of the initial announcements made by the Town of Farmville and Prince Edward County regarding the coronavirus, he has not seen many initiatives to support businesses or people in the community who may be unemployed or struggling.

While he said he may be wrong, he expressed concern that he "hasn't seen a lot of comradery" among county leaders or specific pushes to help underserved populations or businesses in the area.

"It's been quiet," he said.

PROVIDING A WAY

But that may not be the case for long.

This week, the county announced the purchase of 280 acres of land off Persimmon Tree Fork Road for a data center site at a cost of \$1.5 million.

"I am very excited about this new endeavor and look forward to discussing it with people in our community," Brad Watson, chair of the Prince Edward IDA and managing director of investments at Davenport, said in a statement Tuesday about the data center. "Our new initiative surely won't solve all our problems, but it is a big step in the right direction. If executed properly, I think it will benefit everyone in the area."

Kate Pickett, director of economic development with Prince Edward County, said the county's vision has been to prioritize economic development in its strategic plan.

"The long-term vision is to promote business development with a focus on expanding the tax base and creating jobs through collaboration with community partners in order to strengthen, enlarge, and diversify our economy," she said.

One way the county has recruited industries has been through land in the county designated as an Enterprise Zone. Enterprise Zones, located throughout Virginia, can attract businesses through providing two grants from the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development for job development and real property investment.

Prince Edward's designation as an Enterprise Zone was set to expire in December 2019. However, the request the county sent to renew the designation was accepted. Prince Edward's Enterprise Zone is located through the Town of Farmville, as well as through parts of Prospect, Rice, Virso, Meherrin and Keysville.

"Having our county's enterprise zone renewed

will allow for us to continue this partnership and promote economic development through real property investment and job creation," Pickett said, adding that the grants aren't only for new businesses coming into the area. "We are able to offer grants and incentives for local businesses to locate or expand within the designated zone and this money helps to offset the costs of the upfront real property investment and/or creation of new jobs for those businesses," Pickett said.

For business currently undergoing challenges, Pickett said grant funding or assistance from area organizations are available.

"The county has received Rapid Response Grants from the South Central Workforce Development Board and has reached out to numerous businesses who may want to utilize this grant funding," Pickett said.

"The grants are for small businesses who need assistance with certain costs related to the current COVID-19 crisis that mitigate or minimize potential job losses. This may include paying for cleaning services, paying for cleaning supplies and masks, or purchasing items to assist in teleworking."

To learn more about those resources, contact Pickett at kpickett@co.prince-edward.va.us.

The Small Business Development Center (SBDC), located at Longwood University and funded in part by the Small Business Administration, and the Virginia Growth Alliance (VGA), are other options.

Services SBDC provides include assistance to apply for Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL) or for the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), as well as consulting services. The VGA is offering a web platform for businesses that lack online presences. The businesses, free of charge, can place their information, menus or items that they sell for customers to view. To learn more, visit sbdc-longwood.com or vagrowth.com.

Though actions are being taken to support area businesses, Watson said the county and town should continue to aim higher.

"We need to think bigger," Watson said Tuesday. "Now is the time for local governments to work together. There is no reason why the town and county can't collaborate on economic development. If a business or a family moves to Farmville, both town and county benefit."

He said sustaining economic development would require more than temporary solutions.

"Instead of putting

band-aids on the same old problems by spending a little money here and a little money there, our economic development strategies need to focus on big ideas to grow our community—increasing the number of people living here and the number of people working here. Our K-12 schools don't need us to simply patch a leaking roof on an outdated building—we need to construct entirely new educational facilities to meet the challenges of tomorrow. We can't do that with our current local tax revenues," Watson said.

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CORRECTION

Buckingham County

Notice of
Dual Party Primary
Tuesday, June 23, 2020

Republican Party Primary for U.S. Senate & Democratic Party Primary for U.S. House of Representatives, 5th Congressional District

Registered voters can vote in either primary, but NOT both.

A PHOTO ID IS REQUIRED TO VOTE
Please verify your voter registration & polling place before Election Day at elections.virginia.gov
POLLS are OPEN 6 a.m. - 7 p.m.

May 26, 2020: Last day to register to vote or change your voter registration information for this upcoming election.

In-Person Absentee Voting Now Available
Buckingham County Elections Office
13360 W James Anderson Hwy, Buckingham, VA 23921

Monday-Friday 8:30 am – 4:30 pm (excluding holidays)
and
Saturday, June 20, 2020 8:30 am – 4:30 pm

Saturday, June 20, 2020: Last day to vote an in-person absentee ballot at the Buckingham County Elections Office.

Absentee Voting is Also Available by Mail
Tuesday, June 16, 2020: Last day to request an absentee ballot to vote by mail. Applications must be received in the Buckingham Elections Office by 4:30 pm

Tuesday, June 23, 2020 - Election Day: ALL voted absentee ballots must be returned to the Buckingham Elections Office by 7 pm to be counted.

For questions contact:
Lindsey G. Taylor, Director of Elections
P.O. Box 222, Buckingham, VA 23921
PHONE: 434-969-4304 FAX: 434-969-2060
Email: Elections@buckinghamcounty.virginia.gov

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The Farmville Herald

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Friday, June 19, 2020

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Gov. declares Juneteenth a holiday

BY ALEXA MASSEY
The Farmville Herald

Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam announced his intention to mark Juneteenth (June 19) a permanent paid state holiday during his Tuesday, June 16, press conference.

A press release said Northam was kicking off the holiday by giving state em-

ployees a day off Friday, June 19. Although Virginia has long marked Juneteenth by issuing a proclamation, the date was not previously considered an official state holiday.

According to the release, Juneteenth is the oldest known commemoration of the end of slavery in the U.S. It marks the day in 1865 that enslaved people in Galveston,

Texas, the last of the former Confederate states to abolish slavery, finally heard that the Civil War had ended and learned that the Emancipation Proclamation had made them free more than two years earlier.

According to Juneteenth.com, Texas was not initially heavily impacted by the proclamation due to the lack

of Union troops to enforce the new executive order.

Previously this month, U.S. President Donald Trump received immense backlash after he announced plans to hold a campaign rally on Juneteenth in Tulsa, Oklahoma, the site of one of the country's deadliest race riots in 1921. The date of the rally was later changed to Saturday, June 20.

"This is a big display of progress, and I am grateful for Virginia for leading the way," singer Pharrell Williams, a Virginia native, said in reference to the governor's announcement. "From this moment on, when you look at the vastness of the night sky, and you see those stars moving up there, know

See JUNETEENTH, Page A8



ROGER WATSON | HERALD

The Longwood campus has been a lonely place this spring where the spring flowers have largely been unappreciated by students who were forced to abandon campus and continue their studies online due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Imagine Farmville Future of higher education

BY ROGER WATSON
The Farmville Herald

Since shutting down the campus and sending students home shortly after spring break in mid-March, Longwood University has had a campus in the middle of Farmville that has felt expectant.

Like a beautifully decorated hotel ballroom awaiting a fancy dinner party, the deserted quad seems to beckon life, but only the whirl of the air conditioners on the roofs of buildings surrounding the campus green space can be heard on a bright sunny day when students should have been coming and going, working to finish up

semesters, wrap up degrees and launch into a world confident of a bright tomorrow.

Instead, the campus is more like a ghost town, with curious squirrels outnumbering students on this bright, spring day. The residence halls, classrooms, dining areas and athletic fields sit deserted. Millions of dollars of infrastructure were suddenly turned into a health liability by a virus that made its way to Farmville from China or Europe or parts unknown. One of the town's biggest economic engines sits oddly idle.

A similar scene plays out just down the road at Hampden-Sydney College. Its more

than 1,000 students were also sent home to safety to continue studies online, leaving its historic campus devoid of student life in the spring, an odd situation for the 245-year-old campus.

As spring has turned to summer, thoughts of what will come in the fall have begun. Plans are being made to return students to campus, but also to a very different type of college life.

Peter Blake, the director of the State Council of Higher Education, explained this "new normal" during Gov. Ralph Northam's Thursday,

See EDUCATION, Page A5

Champion for veterans dies

BY TITUS MOHLER
The Farmville Herald

An 80-year-old Prospect man was killed Tuesday morning, June 16, in a single-vehicle crash on Prince Edward Highway.

According to information from the Virginia State Police (VSP), Thomas M. Hicks was driving on U.S. Route 460 just west of Route 695 at 8:28 a.m. when his 2008 Chevrolet Equinox ran off the right side of the road, striking a ditch, an embankment and then overturning several times.

Hicks was transported to Centra Southside Community Hospital where he died from his injuries. He was not wearing a seatbelt, according to the VSP report. The crash remains under investigation.

Hicks was retired from the U.S. Marine Corps. He was also quite active with the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 7059, based in Farmville.

Fred Hill, past commander of Post 7059 and current



Sgt. Maj. Thomas M. Hicks was retired from the U.S. Marine Corps. He served in the Vietnam War. On the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7059's Facebook page, he was described as one of the post's most dedicated and stalwart comrades.

PRINCE EDWARD

District 4 commander Department of Virginia, said Hicks served two tours in Vietnam as a sniper and retired as a sergeant major. Michael Perutelli, a past

See CHAMPION, Page A2

Area virus case rates plummeting

BY ALEXA MASSEY
The Farmville Herald

Although Virginia Department of Health's (VDH) website shows what at a glance seems like a dramatic increase in novel coronavirus cases for Buckingham County in the past week, Piedmont Health District Director Dr. H. Robert Nash said those figures differ greatly from the health district's case investigations, which show the area's daily case numbers are "dropping like flies."

The encouraging news came Wednesday, June 17. On Wednesday morning, VDH's website reported

a total, overall coronavirus case count of 542 for Buckingham, up 45 cases from a week prior. With the Virginia Department of Corrections (VADOC) reporting only an additional 11 cases from Buckingham County prisons in that time, the jump seemed both concerning and difficult to explain.

VADOC and VDH reported case numbers have had many discrepancies in previous weeks, leading to concern from county officials and area residents about how to stay on top of coronavirus case trends.

See VIRUS, Page A5

Absentee ballots abundant for June 23 primary

BY ALEXA MASSEY
The Farmville Herald

Virginia's June primary elections are almost here, and the effects of the ongoing novel coronavirus pandemic may make the level of absentee ballot voting this year one for the record books.

According to Lindsey Taylor,

registrar and director of elections for Buckingham County, voter registration and voter information updates are down this year compared to last year. However, mail-in registrations and updates are up by 79%.

"Even with it being multiple elections, registration is down in comparison," she said.

Taylor also said that when looking back at the last November elections, requests for absentee ballots have definitely increased.

Taylor said the difference in numbers may be heavily impacted by DMV closures. DMV registration and changes

See ABSENTEE, Page A3



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EDUCATION: No one feels online learning has been a resounding triumph

FROM PAGE ONE

June 11 press conference.

"More courses will be taught in an online or hybrid manner. Classes will be smaller. Schedules will be staggered. Residence life will be spread out," Blake said. "Food service will be offered in non-traditional ways and large-scale events such as performing arts and athletics will be a new experience."

Longwood President W. Taylor Reveley IV and his team at Longwood are working to map out the new normal that will give the dormant campus a spark of life again beginning August 24.

Reveley said some courses will be a hybrid of in person and online and some will be online only.

"That would be true of any semester under any circumstances," Reveley said of the online courses. "But the firm intent is to work with the state very closely to put these safeguards in place and then have in-person learning like we've had in Farmville for these many years, again in the fall."

The same is true at Southside Virginia Community College, where President Quentin Johnson is working with his own team to get students back to class in some form this fall.

"It's my anticipation that they'll be a combination of modalities," Johnson said. "We will continue to have signifi-

cant online instruction." He said programs like nursing and welding that require face-to-face instruction will occur in the classroom with new guidelines for safety precautions to keep faculty and students safe.

Of all the businesses that have been disrupted by the pandemic, higher education is one that has been most affected because of the sudden change to the business model to be almost identical to the model of competitors colleges have spent much energy marketing against.

Pre-pandemic, one of the biggest threats to traditional brick-and-mortar universities was private, online-only competitors who offered students the opportunity to earn degrees from their bed in their pajamas for much less than the cost of traditional college experiences.

Suddenly this past spring, every university in America was forced to go to the model they had been preaching against for years, with students finishing the spring semester online sometimes from their bed and in their pajamas. Except, the traditional universities did not have the advantage of having constructed an online infrastructure over time to manage the sudden change.

"It was really hard," Reveley said of Longwood's quick transition to an online learning platform. "The faculty, in particular, were at that point, and have been

since, really remarkable in making the really hard transition as smoothly as we could. Students, likewise, were really remarkable. Honestly, how they comported themselves in the face of these unprecedented circumstances and the hard work they did through the spring."

The fear for many in higher education was students would enjoy the flexibility of online learning and leave brick and mortar universities behind once the pandemic is over. Reveley said he expects to see a different effect from forcing students to experience online learning for a semester.

He said his counter intuitive sense tells him this could actually work out well for in-person learning schools in the long term. He said the experience of online classes in high school and college for this generation of students has not been one that would cause them to eschew university learning. In fact, now they may embrace it more.

"No one across the country feels like that's (online learning) been a resounding triumph and a resounding appeal as compared to learning in person, and so it's actually possible a strange effect of COVID-19 and the lockdown is going to be that the rising generation in fact, has that much more of an appetite for in-person learning, and all the virtues of being on campus, as compared to

online education. I think that's possible."

But to get to that brighter tomorrow, the university and the state university system has to overcome some financial issues caused by the pandemic.

Public universities in Virginia are expecting a state budget cut after a 20% drop in state revenues due to the economic shutdown associated with the COVID-19 lockdown. There is also the question of what student populations are going to look like the next several years. There is the problem of affordability with parents being out of work. Financial aid reductions have also been discussed as a factor in keeping students out of the classroom.

And without a treatment or a vaccine for COVID-19, the health factors when students return in the fall will be just as real as when they left in mid-March. The uncertainty has some students considering taking a gap year or spending some time satisfying general education requirements in the community colleges before transferring to a university.

Southside Virginia Community College President Quentin Johnson said he has heard some talk of that in light of parents concerned about safety of living away from home.

"There are some students, as I understand it, and some parents who may be thinking about

staying home and maybe taking a look at community college," Johnson said. "I don't wish any of our university partners to have difficulties with challenges like that, but you know we're here and we believe that we've got a product that's affordable, accessible, we have academic rigor and are accredited by the same organizations that four-year institutions are."

Johnson said students who need to work and go to school or take a timeout for a year may find the community college system to be a good alternative.

Although there is more uncertainty in the incoming college population this year than in past years due to a variety of circumstances around health safety and economic factors, Reveley said it appears Longwood's population is fairly committed to being there when the school reopens August 24.

"We haven't heard a lot

of discussion about gap years or about community colleges among Longwood students," he said. "I think it is just the overarching financial uncertainty itself that's really weighing on families and students."

Reveley said he believes Longwood is going to come out of this crisis stronger than before. He listed the other turbulent times in Longwood's history including some of the last fighting of the Civil War happening on Longwood's doorstep, two World Wars and the beginning of the Civil Rights movement at R.R. Moton High School.

"On the other side of all this, the zeal is going to be that much greater for a beautiful campus. The mentoring that occurs when you really know your professor and your professor really knows you," Reveley said. "We're a school where the classroom is a sacred space. I think that is going to make us stronger."

VIRUS: a good direction

FROM PAGE ONE

Nash said Wednesday afternoon he had been contacted by Buckingham County Administrator Rebecca Carter regarding concern surrounding new figures.

"Nobody's numbers agree," he said. "Our district numbers come from our district case investigations, so we know a name and an address of every person that's in our spreadsheet, and that spreadsheet is run by the district epidemiologist only. She runs every single entry, and I know that every single one is correct. There are no duplications. There are no deletions."

Nash said the district's numbers have for several weeks been consistently higher than VDH's reports by approximately 11 cases. Despite the recent increase in VDH's numbers, Nash said he went through district numbers line-through-line after being contacted by Carter and only saw six new cases for Buckingham County between June 6 and June 13, the district's most up-to-date information.

He added those six most recent cases were widely distributed across the county, with no duplicates and no clusters of cases. He added the district is tracking more than 930 coronavirus cases, over half of which are in Buckingham.

Nash highlighted that the discrepancies in numbers hide a very encouraging statistic — since May 24, the commonwealth's rate of newly-reported cases have dropped by 50%

each week. "In our region, which is from the North Carolina border up to a county and a half above and including Richmond, our seven-day rolling average is about four cases a day," Nash said of last week's numbers.

Nash said he was very excited about the daily case numbers, which he described as "dropping like flies."

He added that the

numbers he views as most important include hospitalization and death data, which monitor the most severe cases. He said the commonwealth's hospitalization and death figures are doing quite well compared to other states.

Nash emphasized that he was not aware of any recent large increase in cases in Buckingham, such as the VDH figures suggest.

"If they were there we would have investigat-

ed," he said.

VDH numbers are also not up to date with the confirmed COVID-19 deaths in the county. Although five Buckingham prisoners have died of COVID-19, the county's VDH death toll has remained at three deaths for weeks.

It remains clear that the numbers vary based on different sources, but Nash expressed that the figures are pointing in a good direction for Virginia and the Piedmont Health District.

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