

# The Charlotte Gazette

DEVOTED TO THE BEST INTERESTS OF CHARLOTTE COUNTY - FIRST, LAST AND ALWAYS

50 cents

Vol. 147 - Number 44

Wednesday, July 15, 2020

Drakes Branch, Virginia

## Fate of monument discussed

By Crystal Vandegrift  
The Charlotte Gazette

Like many other localities, Charlotte County is now faced with what they must do with a Confederate statue — remove it or leave it.

On July 1, new legislation took effect, giving cities and counties around Virginia the power to remove Confederate monuments they own and maintain under the new law.

During its July 13 meeting, the Charlotte County Board of Supervisors (BOS) heard from several citizens who opposed the removal of a monument of a Confederate soldier atop a pedestal in the courthouse square.

The Charlotte County Confederate Memorial was erected in 1902 and stands in tribute to the Confederate soldiers of Charlotte County. The memorial bears the inscription:

“Gloria victis

Charlotte county cherishes the memory of her heroes.

Erected under the auspices of H. A. C.”

During the public comment portion of the meeting, Ron Graves, commander of the Charlotte Gray’s Sons of Confederate Veterans, said, “What’s going on is unacceptable,” telling BOS members the monument’s history.

Kathy Palmer also addressed the BOS saying, “It is a sad day when we have to meet and discuss the fate of our county’s

(See **MONUMENT**, Page 2)



The Confederate Memorial monument located in the courthouse square has become a topic of discussion for the county’s Board of Supervisors.

## Sheriff wants body cameras

By Crystal Vandegrift  
The Charlotte Gazette

The Charlotte County Sheriff’s Office is the only sheriff’s office in the area without body cameras for its deputies. Sheriff Royal Freeman is hoping to change that.

Freeman addressed the Charlotte County Board of Supervisors (BOS) Monday, July 13, seeking approval of \$42,000 to purchase 18 body cameras for his deputies.

According to Freeman, the cameras would cost approximately \$29,194 for equipment with an additional \$12,800 for installation.

Freeman said he is hoping to use a portion

(See **CAMERAS**, Page 2)

## 4-year-old dies in crash

A 4-year-old Charlotte Court House boy has died after a two-vehicle crash in Prince Edward County.

The tragedy, according to a release from Virginia State Police (VSP) Public Relations Director Corinne Geller, occurred Sunday, July 5, at 12:28 p.m. on Route 604, less than a mile south of Route 686.

A 2008 Chevrolet Aveo was traveling north on Route 604 when it crossed the centerline and into the path of a southbound 2004 Chevrolet S10 pickup truck. The truck was unable to avoid the Aveo and struck it in the passenger side.

The driver of the Aveo, Hollie L. Greene, 35, of Charlotte Court House, was transported to a nearby hospital for treatment of serious injuries. She was not wearing a seatbelt.

The 4-year-old male passenger died at the scene. According to the release, the child was secured in a child safety seat.

The driver of the S10, Shirley G. Wright, 71, of Lynchburg, was transported to a nearby hospital for treatment of minor injuries. She was wearing a seatbelt.

The crash remains under investigation, and charges are pending.

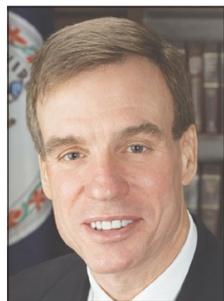
## Bill could boost broadband

By Titus Mohler  
The Charlotte Gazette

U.S. Sen. Mark Warner, a Democrat from Virginia, announced a \$100 billion piece of legislation Thursday, July 9, that could significantly expand broadband in the area.

“The Accessible, Affordable Internet for All Act would invest \$100 billion to build high-speed broadband infrastructure in unserved and underserved communities, helping to bridge the digital divide that still exists in cities and towns all across the country,” he wrote in the emailed announcement titled “A Plan for Rural Broadband.”

“In addition to establishing broadband infrastructure nationwide, this bill would also put guidelines in place to make sure affordable internet service plans are made available by internet service providers,” he said. “It would also help provide



Mark Warner

discounts on internet service for low-income consumers and students and would establish grants to help expand digital inclusion at a local level.”

Charlotte County Administrator Daniel Witt said the county’s Board of Supervisors has identified affordable broadband as one of its primary goals for Charlotte County.

“If Sen. Warner’s initiative helps accomplish that goal, that’s

a big plus for Charlotte County’s citizens,” he said.

Wylliesburg/Red Oak District Supervisor Kay Pierantoni said the county’s efforts to secure more coverage for Charlotte needs all the help it can get.

“I haven’t looked into Sen. Warner’s proposal but will be doing so,” she said. “Chandler Vaughan is an intern who is working on putting together all options/possibilities for the county.”

She noted the board has agreed to have a called meeting before the board’s August monthly meeting just to discuss options at this point and a plan of action.

“Administrator Witt is to contact all interested (internet service providers) to join us,” she said. “Date will be set soon.”

State Sen. Frank Ruff Jr., a Republican who represents

(See **BROADBAND**, Page 4)

## Retailers see coin shortage

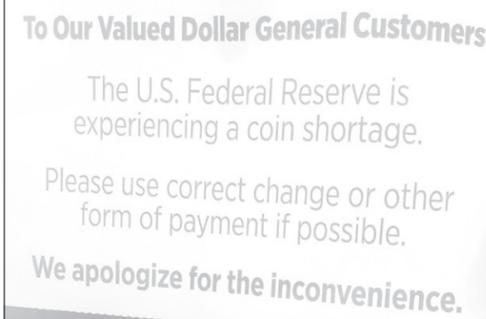
By Crystal Vandegrift  
The Charlotte Gazette

Many retail stores are now asking customers to consider paying for items with a credit or debit card rather than cash and coins due to a nationwide coin shortage.

The Food Lion in Keysville and Dollar General stores throughout the county are two businesses that are seeing a coin shortage.

“We currently have signage in Food Lion stores stating, ‘Due to a nationwide coin shortage, kindly consider paying with exact change or an alternate tender if you are able,’” Kelly Powell, external

(See **SHORTAGE**, Page 4)



Shown is a sign at the Keysville Dollar General Store check-out asking customers to use correct change.

## Cell Tower approved for Madisonville

By Crystal Vandegrift  
The Charlotte Gazette

The Charlotte County Board of Supervisor (BOS) voted 6 to 1 to approve a conditional use permit (CUP) application by U.S. Cellular for the construction of a 5G cellphone tower in the Madisonville area during its July 13 meeting.

Phenix/Aspen Supervisor Donna Fore voted against approval of the CUP.

U.S. Cellular applied for the CUP in January, and a public hearing was originally set for April but was not held due to the COVID-19 pandemic and office closures.

At its June 8 meeting the BOS tabled the vote because one homeowner did not have her

(See **TOWER**, Page 4)

Baseball - Jordan hopes to continue playing career at Chowan - Page 3

Advertising and news deadline: Friday at noon



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# MONUMENT: ‘Destroying history and heritage, is a slippery slope’

FROM PAGE ONE

monument. Ironically, everyone in this county is free to celebrate their diversity, their history, their culture, that is unless you are Southern and descended from a Confederate soldier. I ask you to be cautious. This, the idea of destroying history and heritage, is a slippery slope. Where will it stop? I ask for your support in the protection of the monument.”

During the meeting, a letter was read from James Morton, who wrote, “I think it is of utmost importance to remove the Charlotte County Confederate Monument.”

In his letter, Morton went on to write, “Monuments, statues, schools, seals, and even road names celebrate people and put them on a pedestal (sometimes literally). The Confederacy was many things, and Southern history is a proud one. But the Confederacy also fought to preserve the enslaving of Americans, and

the oppression and murdering of many African Americans. I believe the actions do not reflect the values of the community and are deeply hurtful to decent people everywhere. It is also important to remember that many Confederate monuments and names were dedicated in the first half of the 1900s, when minorities were trying to gain human rights.”

Morton said the issue was about government-sanctioned honoring of Confederate soldiers and not about erasing or hiding history.

“It’s about finding the right way to remember it,” Morton said. “If we want to remember this part of Southern history, we should do it in a museum, where people can learn about it while understanding the context of time.”

The new law states a locality may remove, relocate, contextualize, or cover any such monument or memorial on the locality’s public property, not including

a monument or memorial located in a publicly-owned cemetery, regardless of when the monument or memorial was erected.

Prior to removing, relocating, contextualizing, or covering any such publicly-owned monument or memorial, the local governing body shall publish notice of such intent in a newspaper having general circulation in the locality.

The notice shall specify the time and place of a public hearing at which interested persons may present their views, not less than 30 days after publication of the notice. After the completion of the hearing, the governing body may vote whether to remove, relocate, contextualize, or cover the monument or memorial.

If the governing body votes to remove, relocate, contextualize, or cover the monument or memorial, the local governing body shall first, for a period of 30 days, offer the monument or

memorial for relocation and placement to any museum, historical society, government, or military battlefield.

The local governing body shall have sole authority to determine the final disposition of the monument or memorial.

In addition, a locality may, prior to initiating the public hearing may petition the judge of a circuit court having jurisdiction over the locality for an advisory referendum to be held on the question of the proposal to remove, relocate, contextualize, or cover any monument

or memorial located on the locality’s public property.

Upon the receipt of such a petition, the circuit court shall order an election to be held.

Vice-Chairman Gary Walker made a suggestion to table the issue, saying he felt no action should be taken until they hold a public hearing.

“I don’t want anyone to think we might sneak up here one evening and have a vote like Farmville Town Council did,” he said.

On June 13, Farmville Town Council

held a brief reconvened meeting that was not live-streamed beginning at 7 p.m. By 7:30 p.m., employees were removing a Confederate statue from its pedestal at the intersection of High and Randolph Streets. There was no open discussion on the removal, only a motion to remove the statue.

The BOS now plans to create a committee made up of individuals from various community organizations to discuss the issue with the expectation they would make a recommendation to the board.

# CAMERAS: ‘Body worn camera will strengthen community relations’

FROM PAGE ONE

of the county’s CARES Act funding for equipment.

“The use of the body worn camera would create more transparency between the citizens and the deputies,” Freeman said. “Body worn cameras will strengthen the community relations and improve officer safety and communications with the citizens. We owe this to the citizens and the officers.”

Wylliesburg/Red Oak Supervisor Kay Pierantoni said she liked the idea of more transparency.

“I applaud you as sheriff that you are concerned about transparency,” Pierantoni said.

Phenix/Aspen Supervisor Donna Fore asked Freeman about complaints against the department.

“Tell me the number of complaints you received in the last year of citizens against your deputies and how many people have sued the sheriff’s department in the last year?”

Freeman said since he took office in January, he has not had any lawsuits and maybe three complaints.

“So, we’re going to spend \$42,000 because we might get three complaints and zero lawsuits,” Fore replied. “I’m just trying to be clear here and what the real problem is.”

“One lawsuit is going to cost twice as much as is what you would pay for the camera,” Freeman replied.

During his address, Freeman also said deputies wearing body cameras could help them, and the community stays safe as deputies come in contact with individuals each day that may be COVID-19 positive and not know it.

“The camera footage will give us means of going back to identify and hopefully contact everyone that was at an

incident and let them know of possible exposure,” Freeman said.

Charlotte County Commonwealth Attorney William Green told the board he agreed with everything Freeman said, but the use of body cameras could come with unanticipated expenses.

“Body cameras are probably something that is a very good idea in today’s world,” Green said.

Because an additional position would be needed in the commonwealth’s attorney office, the county could be

looking at \$50,000 to \$80,000 more annually.

According to Green, he would need an individual with a legal background to view and go over camera footage for cases.

“I spend a lot of time telling folks things they may not want to hear, but I also didn’t want you to think that just the cost of the cameras was going to be the cost of this process,” he said.

The BOS made no decision on Freeman’s request tabling the decision until next month on a motion by Pierantoni.



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# The Charlotte Gazette

DEVOTED TO THE BEST INTERESTS OF CHARLOTTE COUNTY - FIRST, LAST AND ALWAYS

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Vol. 147 - Number 45

Wednesday, July 22, 2020

Drakes Branch, Virginia

## School reopening plan approved

By Crystal Vandegrift  
The Charlotte Gazette

The Charlotte County School Board unanimously approved the school reopening plan for an Aug 10 start during its monthly meeting Tuesday, July 14. The plan offers parents two options for educating their children.

Parents may choose to have their children remain at home all week and receive remote instruction from their teachers through Google Classroom, or they may elect to send their children back to

school two days per week and participate in remote instruction for the remainder of the week.

All students will receive either a Chromebook or an iPad to use for both in-person and remote instruction and technology pickup and training dates for parents are available on the school system's website.

According to Charlotte County Public School Superintendent Robbie Mason, after the first two weeks of school, administration will evaluate the number of stu-



Robbie Mason

dents physically present in each classroom and on each bus, as well as local health

data, to determine whether some grade levels can return four days per week.

"Priority for students returning to school four days per week will be given to students in the lowest grade levels," Mason said. "We are excited to prepare for our students to return to school. We wish that students could return every day, but that is not the safest option for CCPS at this time. Our hope is that after two weeks of school we will be able to bring some of our lower grade levels back four days per week, but we

must evaluate our classroom and bus numbers after reopening to determine if we can safely do so."

CCPS has determined the following order of when students will attend school in person and how schools will function:

- Students who have last names beginning with A-J will attend school in-person on Mondays and Tuesdays, while students who have last names beginning with K-Z will attend school in-person

(See **SCHOOLS**, Page 2)



Citizens are in favor of Sheriff Royal Freeman's request to outfit his deputies with body camera.

## Citizens give input on body camera decision

By Crystal Vandegrift  
The Charlotte Gazette

Last week Charlotte County Sheriff Royal Freeman addressed the Board of Supervisors seeking \$42,000 for 18 body cameras he said would create more transparency between citizens and the deputies.

According to Freeman, the cameras would cost approximately \$29,194 for equipment with an additional \$12,800 for installation.

Freeman said he is hoping to use a portion of the county's CARES Act funding for equipment.

The BOS tabled the decision giving Freeman no answer. One supervisor, Donna Fore asked for a number of complaints and lawsuits the department has received over the past year.

Citizens, however, seem to be in support of the sheriff and his request despite the fact that the county having body cameras means an additional \$50,000 to \$80,000 annually for additional help needed in the Commonwealth's Attorney's office to review camera footage.

"I think that body camera

(See **CAMERA**, Page 2)

## Second Amendment sanctuary remains

By Crystal Vandegrift  
The Charlotte Gazette

Charlotte County will remain a Second Amendment sanctuary county following a resolution passed by the Board of Supervisors (BOS).

In November 2019, the BOS voted unanimously to establish the county as a Second Amendment sanctuary.

The Second Amendment sanctuary resolution adopted by the county means they will not expend resources to enforce certain gun control measures perceived as violative of the Second Amendment.

On July 1, new legislation took effect, allowing a county to ban otherwise lawfully possessed and transported firearms from certain public areas.

During its July 13 meeting, BOS members heard from Virginia Citizens Defense League President Philip Van Cleave, who asked the board to continue opposition to any law that would unconstitutionally restrict the right of citizens and visitors to the county.

"I urge you to support the resolution vowing that Charlotte County will not implement any local gun control for its government building, parks, recreation and community center, or permitted events and adjoining streets as would be allowed under the new law."

Rebecca Daly from Saxe sent a letter to the BOS that was read.

"I am asking you to delay any vote on this gun resolution. Given the time of the meeting and the number of

people who want to comment on it I believe it deserves a public hearing," Daly's letter read. "Both sides have a right to be heard on the issue, and it undermines protections put into place for the protection of the public. Any issue this serious warrant careful review and citizen input."

Following the Nov. 5 election, in which Democrats gained the majority in both houses of the General Assembly, Gov. Ralph Northam discussed plans to pass stricter gun laws leaving many gun supporters concerned their Second Amendment rights could be in jeopardy.

In the weeks following the elections, counties around the commonwealth begin passing Second Amendment sanctuary resolutions.

## BOS votes to place sales tax question on ballot

By Crystal Vandegrift  
The Charlotte Gazette

Starting next summer, Charlotte County citizens could be looking at an additional 1% sales tax that would help fund school projects.

The Charlotte County Board of Supervisors (BOS)

voted Monday, July 13, 6 to 1 to petition the circuit court to request a referendum be placed on the November ballot allowing citizens to vote on the additional sales tax.

If citizens vote yes on the referendum, the BOS would then adopt a resolution to add the 1% sales tax beginning July 2021.

Vice-Chairman Gary Walker voted no, saying he wanted to be sure that the additional tax would help lower taxes for citizens in the future, but that it appeared that the additional tax would not be used for such.

(See **TAX**, Page 2)

## County DMV overwhelmed

By Crystal Vandegrift  
The Charlotte Gazette

Like most DMV offices around the state, beginning next week citizens will need to make an appointment to visit the DMV Select office in Charlotte Court House.

Effective July 28, the office will operate by

appointment only.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic causing DMV offices to be closed or operating by appointment, some citizens are not able to get an appointment until late fall. This has caused the DMV Select office in Charlotte Courthouse to be overwhelmed.

Currently, the Commissioner of the Revenue's Office provides DMV Select services as a convenience to taxpayers but is not required to do so and with most other DMV offices around the state either closed or operating by appointment only, Commissioner of the Revenue Naisha Carter says

the office is being bombarded.

"We have too many people coming from all over, creating long lines, and preventing us from doing our office work, which should be the priority," she said.

Carter said her office has been serving DMV customers from as far away as Roanoke, Chesapeake and

Charlottesville.

The office is processing more than 100 transactions per day at least three to four days a week, sometimes with Carter working by herself, compared to the normal 50 to 60 transactions.

To schedule an appointment beginning July 28, call 434-542-5546.

High School ADs favor starting sports in December - Page 4

Advertising and news deadline: Friday at noon



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## SCHOOLS: 'We are excited to prepare for our students to return'

FROM PAGE ONE

on Wednesdays and Thursdays. No students will attend school on Fridays as teachers will use this time to communicate with remote learners and update remote learning lessons.

• Student schedules will be mailed home to parents Tuesday, July 28.

• All CCPS staff will be required to wear face coverings.

• Since students will be seated one per seat

on school buses, six-foot social distancing will not be maintained. As a result, all students who ride on school buses and in county cars will be required to wear face coverings.

• Students are strongly encouraged to wear face coverings in schools. "Wearing a face covering not only protects the student, but it also protects other students and staff," Mason said.

• Staff will conduct health screenings for

students upon their arrival to school each morning. Temperatures will be taken using touchless thermometers and students will be asked a few, simple screening questions. If a student has a temperature above 100 degrees or shows other symptoms, the parent will be contacted to take the child home and follow the school division's policy for returning to school after having a fever. CCPS staff will undergo daily health

screenings, as well.

• Parents are asked to check their child's temperature and make sure that he or she is symptom-free before sending the child to school each morning.

• Students who are using the 100% remote option for instruction (at home all week) must call the child's school one week before returning to in-person instruction to ensure that classroom and bus space is properly considered for the student's return.

• Parents who plan for their children to ride school buses during the school year are encouraged to have them ride buses on the first day of school both to school and back home in the afternoon. This al-

lows the school system to accurately evaluate the number of students on buses and check bus routes for accuracy.

• Parents will not be able to walk their children into school on the first day, or any other school days, until further notice.

• Any parent who has not returned their survey from last month is encouraged to do so as soon as possible.

• In-person Open House will only take place for students in Pre-K and Kindergarten. Parents of Pre-K and Kindergarten students will need to contact their child's school to schedule an appointment with their teacher. Appointments will be available Aug 4, 5, and 6. Teachers for grades 1 through 12 will post

video messages to their school websites for parents and students to access once student schedules are released to parents.

"I ask parents to please be patient as we execute our plans," Mason said, now that the reopening plan is in place. "This is uncharted waters for us all and we know that mistakes will be made, but we must all work together to help our students and teachers. I ask everyone to keep in mind that our plans are contingent upon Virginia remaining in Phase 3 and our local numbers remaining relatively low. We may have to close schools and transition to remote learning for all students should circumstances arise during the school year."

## CAMERAS: 'They can provide valuable information for citizens'

FROM PAGE ONE

would be an excellent tool for the sheriff's department," Retired Virginia State Trooper James Gregory Sr. said. "It will be beneficial to both the department and the public when it comes to transparency and accountability during officer citizen contact."

"They are definitely needed particularly during these days of turmoil and unrest," Elaine Whitehead said. "They can provide valuable information for citizens as well as the legal proceedings that take place in the

county."

For Monique Williams, she said the need for body cameras is a matter of public safety, truth, and transparency. Areas she feels are important for the good of the community.

"The fact that they (BOS) would rather wait until something bad happens to make a decision speaks volumes of why not much progress is happening in Charlotte County," Williams said, "When you are prevention-focused, you do things at the onset, not as an after-thought."

During the July 13

BOS meeting Freeman said he has not had any lawsuits and may be three complaints from citizens about his department but said, "One lawsuit is going to cost twice as much as is what you would pay for the camera."

Larry Newcomb said Charlotte County deputies have a hard enough job as it is and body cameras will give them protection from those causing trouble and misconstruing false information for personal gain as well as give others a more sense of security they are upholding the law to the right standards.

## TAX: 'I believe this one-cent sales tax will have a positive effect'

FROM PAGE ONE

Earlier this year, legislation was approved by both the State House and State Senate and signed into law by Gov. Ralph Northam that allows additional local sales tax in certain localities to be used for construction or renovation of schools.

At its Jan 8 meeting, the BOS unanimously voted to adopt a resolution in support of a 1% sales tax increase and requested that Del. James Edmunds introduce legislation giving the county the authority to place a referendum on the November ballot.

According to County Administrator Dan Witt, the 1% tax would go away once the debt service is paid off or once the projects are completed.

Witt said the tax would be a user tax

and does not negatively impact low and middle-income persons and has the potential to lessen the tax burden by bringing in an estimated \$700,000 in additional revenue to the county.

If approved, the tax would be placed on beer, wine, cigarettes, and prepared foods.

"Medicine and food off the shelf would not be taxed," Witt said.

Wylliesburg/Red Oak Supervisor Kay Pierantoni who will serve on a newly created committee that will work to inform citizens of the needed tax said if the referendum is successfully passed, the revenue generated from the 1% sales tax increase will go into a separate fund which can only be used for school renovations or new school construction.

"Unlike other taxes, such as Consumer Utility Tax, none of the

revenue will go to the towns," Pierantoni said. "It will be used 100% for desperately needed repairs and updates to school buildings."

Pierantoni further said if this tax does not pass, she believes the course of action will be to continue to raise real estate and personal property taxes while just doing the bare minimum at the schools.

"Further raising of real estate taxes hurts our chances for economic development among things while continuing to allow schools to be on a back burner," Pierantoni said. "I believe this one-cent sales tax will have a very positive effect across the county and be good for our future."

I hope all citizens will agree that we need to have safe buildings for our students that promote a good learning environment."

## CCPS to host parent meetings

Charlotte County Public Schools (CCPS) will host several parent meetings starting next week that will provide parents an opportunity to hear about specific safety and educational procedures that will be implemented this coming school year.

The meetings are not mandatory for parents.

Superintendent Robbie Mason and individual school principals have scheduled school reopening meetings for parents at the following schools and dates: Bacon District Elementary Monday,

July 27, Eureka Elementary Tuesday, July 28, CMS/RHHS Wednesday, July 29 (at RHHS auditorium),

and Phenix Elementary Thursday, July 30.

The meetings will take place from 6 to 7 p.m.

EFFECTIVE JULY 28, 2020

**DMV SELECT IN CHARLOTTE COURT HOUSE TO OPERATE BY APPOINTMENT ONLY**

The DMV Select in Charlotte Court House will operate by appointment only as of July 28, 2020. The Commissioner of the Revenue's Office provides DMV Select services as a convenience but is not required to do so. The DMV Select office hours are 8:30AM to 4:45PM, with the last appointment at 4:30PM. To schedule an appointment, please call 434-542-5546.



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<b>Estes Community Center (Chase City)</b>	
8am-4:30pm (Mon, Tues & Thurs)	
11:30am-9:00pm (Wed)	434-372-0194
<b>Lake Country Advanced Knowledge Center (South Hill)</b>	
8am-5:00pm	434-955-2252
<b>Southern VA Higher Education Center (South Boston)</b>	
9am-3:00pm	434-572-5453
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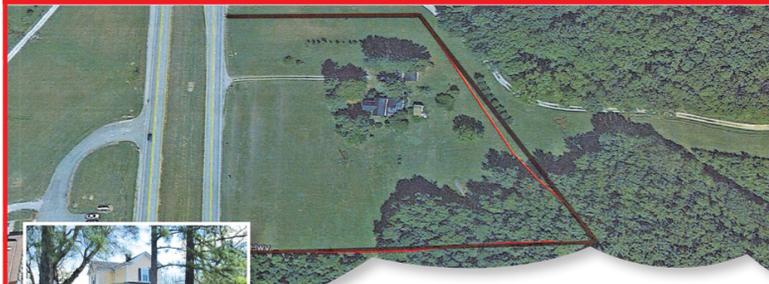
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# The Charlotte Gazette

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Drakes Branch, Virginia



## Meet the teachers drive-by

Eureka Elementary School held a meet the teachers drive-by Wednesday, Sept. 16. Parents could drive students by the school and see their teachers cheer them on as they continue with virtual learning. Above are fourth-grade teachers at Eureka Elementary School along with Principal Brian Hamilton. Pictured are, from left, Eddie Jones, Brian Hamilton, Shelly Schrader, Beth Burnett, Kathy Matthews, and Alexis Glascock.

## Early voting underway

By Crystal Vandegrift  
The Charlotte Gazette

Charlotte County Interim Registrar Eric Goode said a lot of voters have been taking advantage of early in-person voting.

On Monday afternoon, Goode said there had been a total of 54 in-person votes cast and 490 mail-in votes.

With No Excuse, Early Voting in place this election year, Goode said earlier this month his office had seen an uptick in Vote by Mail applications.

Gov. Ralph Northam introduced legislation earlier this year with the goal to increase voter turnout and decrease congestion at the polls on Election Day.

Goode explained that the No Excuse, Early Voting is new this year. Voters have until Oct. 31 to cast their votes.

"In the forefront this year is No Excuse Early Voting (rather than Absentee Voting) because voters are not required to provide a reason," Goode said. "The difference being, voters may vote in-person during this 45-day

period without completing an application. It allows voters to vote in person without having to complete forms and should negate long lines on Election Day."

Voters planning to vote in person at the Charlotte County registrar's office are asked to wear face coverings, although not required.

"No voter can be turned away because he/she fails to wear a mask," Goode said.

Statewide as of Monday, Sept. 21, the Virginia Department of Elections was reporting that 36,740 people had voted in person. Mail in ballot applications were listed at 864,225.

Mail Ballot Applications represent the number of voters who have applied for mail ballots but who have not yet returned them. In 2016, some 77,433 mail ballots were never returned.

In 2016 the Virginia Department of Elections reported that 615,843 votes were cast during the November presidential election.

(See VOTING, Page 2)

## Vehicles, home struck by gunfire

By Crystal Vandegrift  
The Charlotte Gazette

The Charlotte County Sheriff's Office is continuing to investigate multiple shots that were fired into vehicles and a dwelling in August.

According to investigators, deputies

responded to a call of shots fired Aug. 29 around 11:30 p.m. at a home on Hermon Road in the Saxe area. Upon arrival, deputies found two vehicles had been shot multiple times and a home that had been shot once.

No injuries were reported.

The sheriff's office is offering a reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of those involved in this crime.

If you have information pertaining to an incident, please call the sheriff's office at (434) 542-5141 and ask to speak to an investigator.

## Sheriff's office to get body cameras

By Crystal Vandegrift  
The Charlotte Gazette

The Charlotte County Sheriff's Office will add new technology to its uniforms in the coming months after waiting two months for the Board of Supervisors (BOS) to approve funding for body-worn cameras for deputies.

During its September meeting, board members approved earmarking CARES Act funds to purchase the body cameras requested by Sheriff Royal Freeman.

In July, Freeman addressed the BOS seeking \$42,000 to purchase 18 body cameras for his deputies.

According to Freeman, the cameras would cost approximately \$29,194 for equipment with an additional \$12,800 for installation.

At the September meeting, Freeman once again addressed the board, pointing out the need for body-worn cameras.

"The use of the body-worn camera would create more transparency between the citizens

and the deputies," Freeman said. "Body-worn cameras will strengthen community relations and improve officer safety and communications with the citizens. We owe this to the citizens and the officers."

Wylliesburg/Red Oak Supervisor Kay Pierantoni said she liked the idea of more transparency.

"I applaud you as sheriff that you are concerned about transparency," Pierantoni said.

At the July meeting, Charlotte County Commonwealth Attorney William Green told the board he agreed with everything Freeman said, but the use of body cameras could come with unanticipated expenses.

"Body cameras are probably something that is a very good idea in today's world," Green said.

Because an additional position would be needed in the commonwealth's attorney office, the county could be looking at \$50,000 to \$80,000 more annually.

According to Green, he would need an individual with a legal

(See CAMERAS, Page 2)

## County approves \$40K for broadband plan

By Crystal Vandegrift  
The Charlotte Gazette

Charlotte County is on the path to bring broadband capabilities to homes within the county as the Board of Supervisors have approved entering into an agreement with RiverStreet Networks to produce an engineering plan.

The broadband fiber to the home network engineering plan comes with a \$40,000 price tag to the county.

According to the county administration office documents, the engineering plan will provide the county with a map of existing fiber networks and outline phases of proposed fiber buildouts, including cost and other information associated with those fiber buildout phases.

"I think broadband needs to be looked at as a needed utility," Supervisor Donna Fore said.

Fore, who has been outspoken for the need of broadband in the county, said the engineering plan was needed because having the study was like having the foundation of a home.

"We need this study regardless," she said. "But building a

fiber network takes time."

County officials are expected to receive the plan from RiverStreet Networks by February 23, 2021.

Once complete, the county can use the plan to apply for grant applications with any internet service provider to assist in future fiber broadband buildouts.

Short term, the county has been working with the Director of Charlotte County Library System, Jim Watkins, to develop solutions for meeting internet needs in the county.

Each of the county library locations is in the process of receiving updated internet hotspot capabilities.

The updated internet hotspots will provide 3 mbps download, and 1 mbps upload to all connected patrons within the range of the libraries' internet network and provide service from 6 a.m. to 11 p.m.

Last fall, Charlotte County officials learned that infrastructure construction to provide broadband internet for the county could start as early as this year

(See PLAN, Page 2)

VHSL sets date to start high school sports

Page 3

Advertising and news deadline:

Friday at noon



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