

The Farmville Herald

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

Farmville, Virginia

Wednesday, February 10, 2021

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Northam wants kids back in class

BY TITUS MOHLER
The Farmville Herald

Gov. Ralph Northam called on all K-12 school divisions in the commonwealth Friday, Feb. 5, to make in-person learning options available by March 15.

A press release from the office of the governor added that in recognition of significant learning losses over the past year, Northam also encouraged school divisions to offer classroom instruction as an option during the summer months.

The school systems in Buckingham, Cumberland and Prince Edward counties have already begun to offer in-person instruction, and the

Buckingham and Cumberland superintendents noted Friday that their divisions are already talking about summer learning possibilities.

“The (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention), which updated their guidance last week, say it’s possible to do this safely,” Northam said of in-person instruction during a Friday press conference. “(National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Director) Dr. (Anthony) Fauci has said it’s possible to do this safely. President (Joe) Biden has said it’s possible to do this safely. And we will do it safely. And the experience of school divisions across the state

See **CLASS**, Page A9



JENNIFER KINNE

Prince Edward County Public Schools is among the area school divisions already offering in-person learning options for students. Pictured, Christine Randolph, an instructional assistant in a first-grade classroom, works with students Julian Robinson, left, and Austin Dase.

Gold mine bill moves on to Senate

BY TITUS MOHLER
The Farmville Herald

A bill calling for a study evaluating the impacts of gold mining on public health, safety and welfare in Virginia, while also setting a temporary limit on gold mining operations successfully passed the Virginia

House of **BUCKINGHAM** Delegates Friday, Feb. 5.

Heidi Dhivya Berthoud, secretary for Friends of Buckingham environmental advocacy group, announced the success in a Sunday, Feb. 7, email.

“We’ve done it,” she wrote. “HB2213 gold moratorium and study (with substitutes) passed out of the House of Delegates on Friday, Feb. 5, 55-45 (along party lines, sadly). Feel free to thank Del. Elizabeth Guzman for championing this bill.”

Buckingham Del. Matthew C. Farris voted in opposition to the bill.

The bill, known formally as House Bill 2213 (HB2213), was being carried by Guzman.

The piece of legislation stemmed from the Friends of Buckingham group because Canadian-based company Aston Bay Holdings had been performing drilling activities in search of gold in Buckingham for several years on the property of the Weyerhaeuser timber company. It wasn’t until 2020 that citizens and officials became aware of the drilling operations.

Berthoud said that next, the bill will go to the state Senate Rules Committee. She encouraged the bill’s supporters to reach out to their respective senators via email and phone and to sign an action letter to the full committee and to call the committee.



Buckingham Welding III student William Scharer has helped to craft 100 metal brackets to hold up plexiglass desk shields that will be utilized in protecting students against COVID-19 upon a return to in-person instruction.

Student welds a solution

BY ALEXA MASSEY
The Farmville Herald

BUCKINGHAM

A Buckingham welding student has helped to make a safe return to school possible for his peers thanks to some hard work and ingenuity.

William Scharer, 17, has attended Buckingham County Public Schools (BCPS) his whole life. Now a senior in high school, Scharer is a part of Buckingham Welding Instructor Chris Walter’s advanced Welding III course at the Buckingham County Career and Technical Center.

Like many schools, BCPS students had to adapt to an all-virtual learning environment last semester due to the COVID-19 pandemic. During the fall, school officials were developing a plan to get students back in the classroom safely, and part of that plan included

plexiglass desk shields for the high school and career tech buildings.

The shields were a must-have in order to bring students back, but the brackets the school needed to purchase in order to install the shields were going to be very expensive. That’s when the welding department was approached by the administration for help.

Walter and Scharer immediately began the process of sketching, designing and fabricating a prototype bracket. Once the concept was approved, a material jig was designed and constructed that would allow for 100 metal brackets to be fit and welded into 50 sets for holding each plexiglass desk shield.

See **SOLUTION**, Page A10

COVID figures look encouraging

BY ALEXA MASSEY
The Farmville Herald

COVID-19 cases are continuing to decline throughout the Piedmont Health District and much of Virginia as more and more citizens get their second dose of the vaccine.

The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) continues to declare cases in Prince Edward, Buckingham, Cumberland, Charlotte and Lunenburg counties as decreasing, with some counties seeing large drops in their number of weekly cases.

Monday, Feb. 8, Prince Edward County was listed

See **COVID**, Page A2



Work is done to install the marquee for the High Street Theatre, a new cinema and black-box theater in Farmville that looks to soon offer varied programming, including films and intimate stage performances.

New theater to open on High Street

Downtown Farmville has a new sign of progress.

Recently, Farmville residents watched as a fresh new marquee was hung along the corner of High and Main streets, soon to be home of the

LONGWOOD

High Street Theatre, a new cinema and black-box theater envisioned as a place for community events and film.

See **THEATER**, Page A2



Volume 130 | Number 26
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OBITUARIES
OPINION

A3
A4

A TO Z KIDS NEWS
CLASSIFIEDS

A6
A7-8

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SURPRISE: Man wanted for murder involved in Buckingham County crash **A10**

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Wednesday, May 19, 2021

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Graduation day



STACI BRIDGE | HERALD

Three local schools held graduation over the weekend. Longwood University conferred 1,191 degrees to graduate students Friday and undergrads Saturday. Noah Isabella Leech, above, was one of the Longwood students overjoyed to receive their college degree. Below left, Rickey Jackson Jr. gets a congratulatory fist bump from Cumberland High School Principal Eugene Williams Jr. Cumberland High School seniors graduated in two sessions Friday morning and Friday afternoon. Buckingham High School held graduation Saturday morning on the school's football field. Below right, Kentayveus Morris gives the crowd a thumbs up after receiving his diploma. More graduation stories and photos are on pages A2, A11 and A12.



ALEXA MASSEY | HERALD



ROGER WATSON | HERALD

United Way to shut down

The board of the directors of the United Way of Prince Edward County has unanimously decided to end operations after more than 50 years of helping serve the needs of area nonprofits. A press release from the organization said the board made the decision the week of May 2, but waited until it could notify its partner organizations before making the decision

PRINCE EDWARD

public. "This has been a very difficult decision, but after much discussion over the past few years, we have decided that it is time," United Way President Rucker Snead wrote in a letter notifying the organization's members of the recent vote.

See **UNITED WAY**, Page A2

Wreck takes life of karate instructor

A former Farmville karate instructor died recently in a three-car crash on Route 60 in Powhatan County.

Michael Eggleston, 58, of Powhatan, owned a karate studio on West Third Street in Farmville. He was the owner of a karate studio in North Chesterfield at the time of his death.

The preliminary report from the Virginia State Police said Eggleston's Hyundai Elantra was traveling west on Route 60 Sunday, May 9, shortly after 10 p.m.

when he slowed to make a left turn into his driveway. As he did that, a 2012 Ford Fusion struck Eggleston's car in the rear causing the Hyundai to be struck by a Ford F150 traveling east.

The report from Sergeant Dylan Davenport, the public information officer of the Richmond Division of the Virginia State Police, said Eggleston succumbed to his injuries while being transported to a local

See **KARATE**, Page A5

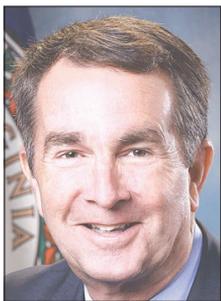
Northam lifts mask mandate

Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam has lifted the state's universal indoor mask mandate and announced Virginia will soon be easing all social distancing and capacity restrictions as a result of the coronavirus.

Northam's announcement, according to a press release distributed late Friday, May 14, aligns with new guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) which say fully vaccinated adults are now safe to gather without masks in most indoor and outdoor settings regardless of size.

According to the release, the mask updates will be reflected in an amendment to Executive Order 72 which became effective Saturday, May 15.

Officials also said Virginia



Ralph Northam

will be easing all distancing and capacity restrictions Friday, May 28, two weeks earlier than planned.

"Virginians have been working hard, and we are seeing the results in our strong vaccine numbers and dramatically lowered case counts," Northam

said. "That's why we can safely move up the timeline for lifting mitigation measures in Virginia. I strongly urge any Virginian who is not yet vaccinated to do so — the vaccines are the best way to protect yourself and your community from COVID-19. The message is clear: vaccinations are how we put this pandemic in the rearview mirror and get back to being with the people we love and doing the things we have missed."

The release says new CDC guidelines state fully-vaccinated individuals do not have to wear masks in most indoor settings, except on public transit, in health care facilities and in congregate settings.

See **MASK**, Page A11



TITUS MOHLER | HERALD

The High Bridge at High Bridge Trail State Park was closed Jan. 18 to allow for a large, preventative maintenance project that replaced all of the bridge's decking.

High Bridge to reopen Wednesday

After a four-month closure for redecking and preventive maintenance, High Bridge Trail State Park will officially reopen the bridge at dawn, Wednesday, May 19.

All 2,422 feet of the bridge's surface decking, curbing (vertical safety fencing) and overlooks have been replaced. The completion of the project will reestablish the 31.2-mile continuous route from Burkeville to Pamplin, as well as reopen the trails in the Camp Paradise area leading down to the substructure of the bridge and the

See **HIGH BRIDGE**, Page A11



Volume 130 | Number 54
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OBITUARIES
OPINION

A3, 5 CLASSIFIEDS
A4 PUBLIC NOTICES

A7-9
A9

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BOBBY HUGGINS PHOTOGRAPHY

E.B. Zirkle of Cumberland Volunteer Fire Department participates in one of the live fire training stations. Zirkle is also a career firefighter in Powhatan County.

Fire training event held

BY ALEXA MASSEY
The Farmville Herald

Dozens of firefighters from across the region gathered at the Buckingham County Fire and Rescue Training Center Saturday, Sept. 18, for the Second Annual Heart of Virginia (HOVA) Regional Fire Training event.

According to Charlie Holland, training officer at Toga Volunteer Fire Department, the program, which began last year, was inspired by the mutual aid agreements between various local fire departments.

Fire departments in the area, including departments in Buckingham, Cumberland and Prince Edward, often run

calls together and assist one another during emergencies, but those departments rarely have the opportunity to train together, Holland said.

The HOVA Regional Fire Training event brings firefighters throughout the region together in order to perform group training exercises and gain experience in the latest in fire safety technology.

At Saturday's event, more than 50 members and instructors from Dillwyn, Cumberland, Farmville, Toga, Bedford, Blackstone, Concord, Darlington Heights, Hanover, Powhatan and Prospect took part in a full day of training exercises. The day included four

See **TRAINING**, Page A9

House fire on Stoney Point Road

BY ALEXA MASSEY
The Farmville Herald

CUMBERLAND

Firefighters rescued a dog from a house fire on Stoney Point Road in Cumberland County on Monday.

According to officials from the Cumberland Volunteer Fire Department (CVFD), firefighters from CVFD and the Randolph District Volunteer Fire Department Company 4 were dispatched at 2:25 a.m. Monday to the 600 block of Stoney Point Road for a reported structure fire. The first arriving unit, offi-

cialists said, noted nothing was visible from the exterior of the home, but upon making entry, crews located a small fire in a bedroom.

The flames were quickly extinguished within 10 minutes of arrival. A dog found inside the home was removed from the structure unharmed.

No occupants were home at the time of the fire. As of Wednesday afternoon, Sept. 22, the cause of the incident remains under investigation.

Improvement plan sent to board

Planning Commission approves CIP, possible new elementary school

BY SHANNON WATKINS
The Farmville Herald

A Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), including an option to renovate or replace the current Prince Edward County Elementary School, was approved Tuesday night by the Planning Commission.

"This is just one step forward," Director of Planning and Community Development Robert Love said. The CIP will be discussed at the October Prince Edward County Board of Supervisors meeting. The Planning Commission only has the power to approve and recommend the CIP.

A CIP is a documented short-term plan for a locality to use as a guide for purchasing or improving necessities and can change or be

PRINCE EDWARD

See **CIP**, Page A2

A Capital Improvement Plan breakdown

BY SHANNON WATKINS
The Farmville Herald

The Prince Edward County Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) has 14 possible projects listed. The following is a guide to all of them. The county's Planning Commission approved the CIP at its Tuesday night meeting and forwarded it to the Board of Supervisors, which will look at it during its October meeting. Projects are listed in the order they

See **BREAKDOWN**, Page A2



SHANNON WATKINS | HERALD

Prince Edward Elementary School, seen above, was a hot topic during the discussion of the county's Capital Improvement Plan at the Prince Edward Planning Commission's Tuesday night meeting.

Innovation grant awarded

BY ALEXA MASSEY
The Farmville Herald

Cumberland County Public Schools (CuCPS) has received a \$42,850 innovation grant which will help implement a career exploration program and promote Virginia's 5 C's.

Cumberland was one of 11 schools in the state to be awarded an innovation grant by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) in a press release issued Thursday, Sept. 16.

The grants, according to the release, are aimed at aiding Virginia school divisions in



Chip Jones

CUMBERLAND

developing or implementing innovative programs which prepare students for

careers and postsecondary education and support the Board of Education's Profile of a Virginia Graduate and Virginia's 5 C's (critical thinking, creative thinking, collaboration, communication and citizenship).

According to CuCPS Superintendent Dr. Chip Jones, Cumberland will use its grant funds to create "Dukes Connect," a career exploration program where students will participate in work-based learning opportunities provided through Learning Resource Centers

See **GRANT**, Page A5

University ranks in top 10

BY CRYSTAL VANDEGRIFT
The Farmville Herald

LONGWOOD

For the sixth consecutive year, Longwood University (LU) is able to add the title of top 10 public universities offering the highest percentage of small classes in the South to its list of achievements.

The listing comes from the

annual *U.S. News & World Report* rankings.

"I'm particularly proud to see that our hard work investing in full-time faculty and small class sizes where we know students thrive is being recognized," Longwood President W. Taylor Reveley IV said.

Since 2013, Longwood has climbed to No. 7 from No. 12 among public institutions in the Southern regional category.

Among public and private regional universities, Longwood is again ranked in the top 20.

According to university

See **RANKS**, Page A5



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Volume 130 | Number 91
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OBITUARIES
OPINION

A3
A4

CLASSIFIEDS
PUZZLES

A6-8
A7

LIFE
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C1
C6

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