



The Tidewater News

115TH YEAR, NO. 63

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 5, 2022

\$1.00

Attorney general files suit against Town of Windsor

BY TRACY AGNEW
EDITOR

In what is being termed a first-of-its-kind lawsuit, Virginia Attorney General Mark Herring has sued the Town of Windsor, alleging the Windsor Police Department has operated in a discriminatory and illegal manner by engaging in a pattern of unconstitutional and discriminatory policing.

A press release from Herring's office on Thursday stated that the

months-long investigation, spurred by a traffic stop in which two Windsor police officers pepper-sprayed and held at gunpoint a Black and Latino man, had "revealed disturbing evidence of discriminatory, unconstitutional policing" and that the police department "has operated in a way that led to discrimination against African Americans and violated their constitutional rights."

This is the first enforcement action against a law enforcement agency under a new state law em-

powering the attorney general to file suit to stop systemic violations of Virginians' civil rights.

The Town of Windsor issued a statement Thursday afternoon denying the allegations, questioning the data used and asserting the lawsuit, and its timing, are politically motivated.

The traffic stop of Lt. Caron Nazario happened Dec. 5, 2020, and came to light in April after Nazario filed suit. He was pulled over on U.S. 460 for lack of a license plate, even though a tem-

porary tag was displayed in the rear window. Officers Daniel Crocker and Joe Gutierrez both pulled their weapons, and Nazario was pepper-sprayed and knocked to the ground. After the video went viral, Gutierrez was fired, but Crocker remained on the force.

Herring's lawsuit states that "at no time did Lieutenant Nazario use or attempt to use force against the officers," and alleges other complaints in which force was improperly used against

Black drivers, but without giving details of those other complaints. "While our investigation was

SEE LAWSUIT, A7

Most localities see record case spike

STEPHEN FALESKI
AND JIMMY LAROUÉ
STAFF WRITERS

Is a second wave of the delta variant to blame for a New Year's weekend spike in COVID-19 cases? Or has the full force of the heavily mutated omicron variant hit the Western Tidewater region?

According to Virginia Department of Health data, Isle of Wight County saw a record-breaking 66 new COVID-19 cases on Dec. 31, then broke that

record on Jan. 2 with 68 more. Prior to that, the county had reported 42 cases on Dec. 29 and another 58 on Dec. 30 — shattering a previous single-day record set last January.

For the week of Dec. 26 through Jan. 1, just under 40% of all COVID-19 tests among Isle of Wight County residents were coming back positive.

As of Jan. 3, the county's 7-day average of new daily cases had risen to 126.4 per 100,000 peo-

SEE CASES, A7



TITUS MOHLER | THE TIDEWATER NEWS

It will be business as usual at The Peanut Patch and Feridies after their sale in December, according to Virginia Diner Inc. President and COO Andrew Whisler, who noted that the longstanding Southampton County landmarks are still locally owned and operated, with the prior owners still part of the day-to-day operations.

Feridies, The Peanut Patch sold

BY TITUS MOHLER
STAFF WRITER

The Gerard Group Inc., which is a collection of Virginia-based business owners/operators, purchased Feridies and its retail shop, The Peanut Patch Gift Shoppe, in December.

Andrew Whisler, with The Ge-

rad Group, stated that even with the sale, Feridies and The Peanut Patch are still locally owned and operated, and the prior owners are still on board and part of the day-to-day operations.

"It is literally business as usual," he said. "We closed the deal, and the next day, life goes on exactly as it has been. They've got a great

business that's been built. We're not looking to disrupt that in any way."

The Peanut Patch and Feridies have been hallmarks of Southampton County since the shop first opened its doors in 1973.

The Gerard Group, which is a

SEE SOLD, A5

FCPS rescinds rollover request to aid cashflow

BY TITUS MOHLER
STAFF WRITER

Franklin City Public School has rescinded its request for \$577,200 to be rolled over to its fiscal year 2022 budget. This was done to help the school system avoid the cashflow issue it faced in October 2021 when it briefly had a negative allocated cash balance.



Ryder

The issue affected not only the school division but also the city

of Franklin.

Explaining the link between the city and the school system's finances, Jeff Ryder, FCPS assistant superintendent of finance, nutrition, operations and special programs, said, "We're part of the city's checking account, but part of their checking account is allocated to us for our operations."

During a Nov. 4 presentation to the school board, Ryder explained the cashflow issue that arose, noting that it had really been building through August

SEE CASHFLOW, A7

Medical center tightens visitation restrictions

BY TITUS MOHLER
STAFF WRITER

Bon Secours - Southampton Medical Center further restricted visitation as of Tuesday, Jan. 4, due to the rise in COVID-19 cases in the area.

Franklin is the smallest Western Tidewater Health District locality, and it was reporting a triple-digit 7-day average of 124.8 coronavirus cases per 100,000 people. Its 28.6% positivity is lower than Isle of

Wight County's and Suffolk's, but it saw 20 new cases on Sunday, Jan. 2, nearly tying its 24-case, single-day record set last September.

Bon Secours Public Relations and Communications Manager Jenna Green particularly highlighted two key changes, effective Tuesday, to what had previously been listed on the "Temporary Visitor Restrictions" page on the

SEE RESTRICTIONS, A7



SUBMITTED | REBECCA LEE

First snow of 2022 comes quickly

The city of Franklin did not have to wait long for the first snowfall of 2022 as it came on the first Monday of the year, Jan. 3. The National Weather Service had reported that new snow accumulation of 1 to 3 inches was possible in the Western Tidewater area given the chance of precipitation forecast for Monday. Pictured above, 5-year-old Jaxon Lee, of Franklin, enjoys throwing a snowball at his mom, Rebecca Lee, who is taking the picture.

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Barbara P. Burgess
Opal E. Elks
Brenda C. Holloman
Robert E. Howe
Floyd L. Hunt
Brenda S. Marshall

KeiYonya Murphy
Ruth A. Story
Edith J. Sykes
Virginia W. Wade
Anthony Kevin Wyche

BEST BET

Grief Support Group: A Grief Support Group for all losses will meet in the conference room at Franklin Cooperative Ministry on the second and fourth Fridays of each month at 10 a.m. beginning Jan. 14. For more information, call Gerry Lewis, facilitator at (757) 562-1366 or (434) 594-6104.

BREAKFAST BOWLS just \$3.99

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The Tidewater News

115TH YEAR, NO. 70

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2022

\$1.00

Collision on Meherrin Road involves Southampton deputy



Southampton Towing & Recovery loads onto the truck one of the vehicles involved in the traffic collision on Meherrin Road in Southampton County on Wednesday, Feb. 16.

BY TITUS MOHLER
STAFF WRITER

A traffic collision involving a Southampton County Sheriff's Office deputy occurred Feb. 16 in Southampton County on Meherrin Road.

Detective Justin Boone of the sheriff's office confirmed the deputy's involvement and stated that the Virginia State Police is actively investigating the collision.

The Courtland Volunteer Fire Department reported on its Facebook page that it had units on the scene of the collision, which it described as a two-vehicle accident with entrapment.

CVFD stated that one of its units extricated the entrapped individual 12 minutes after arriving on scene and 20 minutes

from the initial time of dispatch.

The social media post noted that one patient was airlifted by LifeEvac 4, and one patient was transported to a local hospital.

Sgt. Michelle Anaya, with the Virginia State Police, stated in a Tuesday morning, Feb. 22, email, "In reference to the two-vehicle crash involving the on-duty deputy, the case is still under investigation."

SEE COLLISION, A8

City council celebrates Black History Month

BY TITUS MOHLER
STAFF WRITER

The Franklin City Council unanimously adopted a resolution celebrating Black History Month at its Feb. 14 meeting.

Ward 3 Councilman Gregory McLeMore read the resolution in full.

The resolution adopted is as follows:

Whereas, Black History Month originated in 1926 when Dr. Carter G. Woodson set aside a special period in February to recognize the heritage and achievements of African Americans in the United States; and

Whereas, Black History Month is designed to recognize and pay tribute to the many contributions of African Americans to the history, society and culture of the United States of America; and

Whereas, the contributions of African Americans from all walks of life and their endeavors to learn and thrive throughout history and make unforgettable marks in our nation

SEE COUNCIL, A8



Franklin Department of Parks and Recreation Director Sammara Green-Bailey performs the ribbon cutting inside the new learning center that is part of the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center. She is joined by Franklin Mayor Frank M. Rabil and Franklin City Manager Amanda C. Jarratt, among others.

TITUS MOHLER | THE TIDEWATER NEWS

Grand opening held for new learning center

BY TITUS MOHLER
STAFF WRITER

The Franklin Department of Parks and Recreation hosted the grand opening of its new learning center Tuesday, Feb. 22, at the Dr.

Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center.

The learning center was two-and-a-half years in the making.

Franklin Parks and Recreation Director Sammara Green-Bailey summed up

the purpose of the gathering Tuesday in her presentation to community leaders and donors that were present.

"We are assembled here

SEE CENTER, A8

Petition for elected county school board begins to circulate

BY TITUS MOHLER
STAFF WRITER

Beginning to circulate in Southampton County is a petition calling for a referendum on the November ballot that would allow voters to change how the Southampton County School Board is selected.

Mandy Hall, who is helping to promote the petition, shared the question being asked of qualified voters in the county: "Shall the method of selecting the school board be changed from appointment by the School Board Selection Commission to direct election by the voters?"

The current selection method involves a circuit court judge appointing three people who comprise the School Board Selection Commission, and that commission selects the school board members.

For the petition to successfully

SEE PETITION, A8

IW arrest of motorcycle gang suspect leads to search of Portsmouth business

STAFF REPORT

Isle of Wight County Sheriff's Office deputies searched a Portsmouth business on Feb. 18 - an investigation they say stems from their arrest of suspected outlaw motorcycle gang member Ronald Matthews last year.

Deputies arrested Matthews, 35, at his Carrsville home in December, charging him with seven felonies and one misdemeanor stemming from their search for two vehicles that had been reported stolen.

SEE ARREST, A8

Construction on new Foodbank facility passes midpoint

BY TITUS MOHLER
STAFF WRITER

Construction on the Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia and the Eastern Shore's Western Tidewater Branch and Community Produce Hub has passed its midpoint and has been proceeding well, with little incident.

When it is ready, this two-story facility at 618 South St. in Franklin will become the focal point of the Foodbank's efforts in the area to address food insecurity and its root causes.

"It's several months into construction now," said Foodbank Chief Operations Officer Bob Latvis, who is managing

the project.

He noted that the only major roadblocks in the construction process have been the supply chain interruptions that are affecting people and projects across the country. He said the supply chain has been especially impacted in the construction world.

Foodbank Interim President and CEO Jaynee K. Day said the Western Tidewater Branch and Community Produce Hub's projected launch date is July 1.

"But again, back to Bob's point, supply and demand and the supply chain has been

SEE FOODBANK, A7



TITUS MOHLER | THE TIDEWATER NEWS

This photo shows the construction progress that had been made as of Feb. 9 on the second story of the Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia and the Eastern Shore's Western Tidewater Branch and Community Produce Hub. The branch and hub, located at 618 South St. in Franklin, is estimated to be open and operational by July 1.

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Jerry D. Rice

Linda G. Rowe
Lloyd R. Shaffer Jr.
Samuel W. Stephenson Jr.
Wilton R. Woods

BEST BET
Black History Hall of Fame: Stop by the Courtland branch of the Blackwater Regional Library to unscramble and guess famous faces during the month of February. For more information on all Blackwater Regional Library programs call 757-653-2821, visit our website or Facebook page at www.blackwaterlib.org/.

TWO SINGLE DELUXE *with Cheese*

Don't forget to Round Up to

\$6

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The Tidewater News

115TH YEAR, NO. 94

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 10, 2022

\$1.00



Alexia "Lexi" Noelle Mahone

Police seek public's help in finding Windsor teen

STAFF REPORTS

The Isle of Wight County Sheriff's Office is asking for the public's assistance in locating a missing Windsor teenager — Alexia "Lexi" Noelle Mahone. The sheriff's office not-

ed in a news release that the 14-year-old girl was last seen leaving her home in the Clyde's Dale Mobile Home Community on Thursday, Aug. 4, by her mother at approximately 3 p.m. Lexi is biracial with

brown eyes and black hair, police stated. She is 5 feet, 6 inches tall and weighs 125 pounds. At the time she left her home, she was wearing a black hoodie, blue and yellow basketball-style shorts, a blue bandana wrapped

around her head and slide-on gym shoes.

The release concluded by stating that if anyone has seen Lexi or knows her whereabouts, they are asked to contact the Isle of Wight County Sheriff's Office at 757-357-2151.

Board adjusts start time to open session

**BY TITUS MOHLER
STAFF WRITER**

Citizens are advised to arrive for future Southampton County Board of Supervisors' meetings at 6 p.m. after a decision made by the board at its July 26 meeting.

The board decided that for its future meetings, it will proceed immediately from closed session back into open session rather than waiting until a set open-session time.

The board has been starting its meetings at 6 p.m. and then immediately going into recess for closed session before returning to open session at the set, announced time of 7 p.m.

However, in the event of closed sessions running short, this arrangement created a window of time in which supervisors and county staff were left waiting sometimes 30 minutes or more for 7 p.m. to

SEE START TIME, A10

Precinct 4 polling place moves to Ward 4

**BY TITUS MOHLER
STAFF WRITER**

Franklin Precinct 4 voters will now be voting in Ward 4 at the Franklin Business Center, which is located at 601 N. Mechanic St.

Franklin City Council voted 5-0 during its Monday, Aug. 8, meeting to adopt an updated Ordinance No. 2022-02 that moves the Precinct 4 polling place from the Franklin Sportsman Association Inc. building at 1431 South St. to the business center.

Not voting due to absence from the meeting were Ward 2 Councilman Ray Smith and Ward 3 Councilman Gregory McLemore.

The ordinance states that it will be effective upon receipt of a Certificate of No Objection from the attorney general's office, and the polling

SEE POLLING PLACE, A10

Carrsville crash results in fatality



Virginia State Police responded to a fatal two-vehicle crash around 6:46 a.m. on Monday, Aug. 8. The crash killed one driver and left the other charged with reckless driving.

STAFF REPORT

A two-car crash in Carrsville on Monday, Aug. 8, ended with one driver dead and the other charged with reckless driving.

Virginia State Police say 24-year-old Jose Ivan Marquex-Lizardi of Glen Allen ran a stop sign at the intersection of Holly Run Drive and Joyners Bridge Road. As he crossed into the intersection, a pickup truck driven by 20-year-old Mason Paul Rhodes of Chesapeake struck Marquex-Lizardi's van.

Upon impact, the pickup truck overturned, ejected Rhodes and came to rest on top of him, killing him upon impact. Rhodes was not wearing his seatbelt at the time of the crash.

Police were called to the scene at approximately 6:46 a.m.

Marquex-Lizardi suffered non-life-threatening injuries and was charged with reckless driving, no operator's license and no seatbelt. Neither speed nor alcohol were factors in the crash, according to police.

SUBMITTED | VIRGINIA STATE POLICE

Communities enjoy National Night Out

**BY TITUS MOHLER
STAFF WRITER**

Community members and organizations came out in Franklin, Southampton County and Windsor on Aug. 2 for the opportunity to develop better relationships with law enforcement, other groups and neighbors as part of National Night Out 2022.

National Night Out is an annual community-building campaign that promotes police-community partnerships and neighborhood camaraderie, as noted at NNO's website, natw.org.

Franklin Police Chief Steve Patterson estimates between 500 and 600 people came out to Armory Drive Recreational Park for Franklin's NNO event, which he said he thought went great.

"We had a lot of community support from our churches and sponsors, government support from various city departments, and, above all, our citizens who came out to visit were engaging and asking how they can help for next year," he said.

Armory Park was embodied by a festive atmosphere as music played, children enjoyed



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SUBMITTED | VIRGINIA STATE POLICE

bounce houses and the pool, and conversation was abundant.

Patterson said his personal highlight from the event was watching the interactions between everyone in attendance.

"Whether it was children interacting with our officers, citizens interacting with their elected officials or just simply citi-

zens greeting each other, it showed a great community coming together for an awesome cause," he said.

Southampton County Sheriff Josh A. Wyche Sr. stated that 500-plus county and Franklin citizens came out to Southamp-

SEE COMMUNITIES, A5

Borrow pit expansion approved

**BY STEPHEN FALESKI
STAFF WRITER**

Isle of Wight County supervisors have approved expanding a sand borrow pit located near the Franklin Regional Airport.

Curtis Contracting Inc. had requested a conditional use permit to reopen a portion of the re-claimed 31-acre pit located off Airport Drive, and to expand the site by 11 acres.

The original sand mining operation, located across 290 acres, dates to the 1970s. It was initially operated by E. Carson Whitley Enterprises Inc., which later became Whitley-Hawkins Holdings LLC.

According to Smithfield attorney William Riddick III, who represented Curtis at the supervisors' July 21 meeting, the business does highway construction work in Isle of Wight County.

"They need this material for projects in Isle of Wight County," Riddick said, referring to the sand

SEE EXPANSION, A10

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Haywood G. Lowe Jr.	
William E. Reeves	
Matthew Rooks Sr.	

BEST BET
Bojangles Relay For Life Share Night: On Tuesday, Aug. 16 from 5 - 8 p.m. grab some delicious dinner from Bojangles in Franklin and they'll donate 10 percent of all sales (drive-thru and inside) to Relay For Life. No special action required, just order and enjoy.

Deliveries may not be available at all addresses
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