

*Devoted To The Interests Of Lunenburg County*

# Town awarded \$1 million for revitalization

By Crystal Vandegrift  
*The K-V Dispatch*

**KENBRIDGE**

The Town of Kenbridge has been awarded \$1 million to redevelop a former wood-finishing factory into a manufacturing facility and distribution center. The funds come as part of the Industrial Revitalization Fund (IRF) grants. IRF grants provide gap financing for construction projects aligned with local and regional economic development strategies, primarily in distressed communities.

The announcement came Tuesday morning, Dec. 27, as Governor Glenn Youngkin announced Kenbridge was one of 22 localities to receive more than \$24.7 million in IRF grants.

According to a release from the Governor's office, the funds awarded to the Town of Kenbridge will be used to produce environmentally-friendly food packaging containers using softwood pulp, hardwood pulp, and other agricultural residues in the Old Wood Finishing Factory building.

"The transformation of older, vacant or blighted structures into productive, usable spaces is crucial to catalyzing economic growth to create thriving communities," said Governor Glenn Youngkin. "The Industrial Revitalization Fund continues to be an important resource for those redevelopment efforts, spurring regional partnerships, econom-

ic development and job growth across the Commonwealth."

The Industrial Revitalization Fund (IRF) leverages local and private resources to achieve market-driven redevelopment of vacant and deteriorated industrial and commercial properties. The program is targeted toward vacant non-residential structures whose poor condition creates physical and economic blight to the surrounding area in which the structure is located.

Projects were reviewed and evaluated competitively, with an emphasis on those with a high level of blight, identification of impediments to economic development efforts, alignment with regional or local strategies, availability of matching resources, the level of community distress where the property is located and an identified and feasible end-use.

"These funded projects are transforming deteriorated structures that impede future economic development efforts into small businesses, tourism destinations, and sources of community pride," said Secretary of Commerce and Trade Caren Merrick. "Through IRF grants, we are able to make investments in both Virginia's infrastructure and vibrancy by supporting impactful projects, encouraging strategic collaborations, and fostering economic development efforts."



## Crash leaves one injured

On Monday, Dec. 26, at approximately 6:15 p.m. Kenbridge Fire Department was dispatched to the area of Plank Road near Craig Mill Road for a vehicle crash. Upon arrival, crews found one vehicle that had run off the roadway into the woods. According to a post on the department's Facebook page, one person was entrapped and sustained minor injuries. The cause of the crash is under investigation.

# Winter storm packs holiday punch

By Rachel Austin, Brian Carlton and Crystal Vandegrift  
*The K-V Dispatch*

The winter storm on Friday, Dec. 23, brought many power outages across the area, starting the holiday weekend off to a rocky start.

Starting early on Friday morning, Southside Electric Cooperative responded to numerous outages across its 18-county service area. Winter Storm Elliot brought gusting winds up to 50 miles per hour, falling temperatures into the teens and single digits.

By 1 a.m. on Christmas Eve, the temperature dropped to 7 degrees in Victoria, with a feel of -4 thanks to the wind. That wind, gusting on Friday to 50 mph at

times, knocked down trees and pushed over power lines.

SEC officials said that as of 2 a.m., on Christmas Eve, 5,418 homes remain without power in their coverage area.

In Lunenburg County, there were still 192 people without power, with 230 still out in Charlotte County and 124 in Nottoway.

"I know that being without electricity is inconvenient and difficult at any time, but even more so during this special time of the year," said President and CEO Jason Loehr. "The entire SEC team is here for our members, and we appreciate their patience and understanding."

Dominion Energy reported thousands

See **STORM**, Page 2

# Berry working to be part of Senate change

By Crystal Vandegrift  
*The K-V Dispatch*



Trudy Berry

Since 2017, Jennifer McClellan has served as the state senator for Virginia's 9th district. During that time, the district included Charles City County, along with parts of Hanover County, Henrico County and the city of Richmond. But that was before redistricting. The 2023 elections are the first under Virginia's newly redrawn maps and now, the district has shifted to parts of Central and Southside.

That includes Charlotte County, Halifax, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, Nottoway and Pittsylvania counties, along with part of Prince Edward County and the city of Danville. And a relocated district means new candidates running for the seat. One of them announced her campaign on Thursday, Dec. 22.

Just days before the Christmas holiday, Lunenburg County resident

Trudy Berry announced her intentions to seek Virginia's 9th District Senate seat, noting honesty, integrity, equality and justice as her platform.

This is not Berry's first attempt at public office. Berry ran for a delegate seat in the past.

"I chose to run for state office again, although for senator this time rather than delegate, to continue to address how legislation, or the lack thereof, allows inequality and injustice to persist, to bring rural voices to the General Assembly to protect the interests and livelihoods

of rural Virginians, and to work to codify human rights protections," Berry said in an interview earlier this week.

**CHANGE IS NECESSARY**

According to Berry, legislative change is necessary to lift people out of poverty and ensure their health and well-being. "Real change will come about only when we replace long-term incumbents with new leaders who will bring a new perspective and outlook to legislating," Berry said. "I will place emphasis on legislation that benefits people over politics and corporations and does no harm to people or the environment. as a Senator, I can work to protect our human rights and improve the economy of rural Virginia by legislating for equality and justice for all."

Berry said everyone should feel they are and be treated equally in the

See **BERRY**, Page 2

# State solar workgroup can't agree on regulations

By Charlie Paullin  
*Virginia Mercury*

A work group convened by highly debated 2022 legislation to hammer out the details of new regulations for the siting of solar projects on farm and forest lands failed to reach consensus on most of what it was brought together to debate.

The regulatory advisory panel created by House Bill 206 delivered its report to the General Assembly on Dec. 1 in a 717-page document that included discussion of 41 proposals around definitions, processes and who should be involved with

implementing the new regulations.

The work group reached consensus on only four of those proposals and came close to consensus on 14. But on 23 — more than half of those considered — they remained deadlocked.

Republican Del. Michael Webert, R-Fauquier, sponsored the 2022 legislation, which stated that solar projects that disturb more than 10 acres of prime agricultural soils or more than 50 acres of contiguous forest lands create a significant adverse impact and must provide a

See **SOLAR**, Page 2

Working on Lunenburg's history  
Page 10

Advertising and news deadline:  
Friday at noon



**WE BRING SOLUTIONS!**

- Website Development • Targeted Emails
- Targeted Digital Marketing
- Print & Online Marketing Solutions

Solutions to help you maximize exposure and connect with your audience!



# STORM: Thousands left without power

FROM PAGE ONE

of power outages across Virginia Friday as an arctic front brings very cold and windy conditions to the Commonwealth.

As of about 6:30 p.m. on Friday, power was out to more than 7,654 homes in Central

Virginia, according to Dominion Energy. In total, more than 43,600 Dominion Energy customers were without power in the Commonwealth.

On Friday, by 11:30 p.m., Mecklenburg Electric Cooperative reported throughout the course of the day, power had been restored to 5,308

accounts and crews continued to work to restore 143 services remaining without power.

By 7 a.m. on Christmas Eve overnight, crews continued to restore service and got those without power to less than 100. According to Mecklenburg Electric, all remaining

79 outages were complete by midday today. That included repairing or replacing two damaged poles.

“As we address our last broken pole/outage and retire Storm Elliott to the MEC history books, I want to, once again, reach out to our outstanding employees and

express my appreciation to them for their response to yet another significant outage event...this one right here at the Holidays when our members’ homes are full of family and friends ready to enjoy the holidays,” said Mecklenburg Electric Cooperative President and CEO John C. Lee Jr.

# BERRY: ‘I can work to protect our human rights

FROM PAGE ONE

criminal justice system. “Justice must be given without regard to religion, race, ethnicity, sex, or gender identity,” she added.

## WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT TRUDY BERRY?

Berry was born and raised in Michigan. She enlisted in the U.S. Air Force after high school

graduation, serving from 1974 to 1978 as a Legal Services Specialist. She received a B.S. in Sociology with a concentration in Criminal Justice from Longwood University. She also has a and a Certificate in Social Policy Administration from the university.

She may have been born in Michigan, but Berry has lived in a number of states.

“Michigan is my home state, but I also lived in

California, Hawaii, Maryland, New York, Virginia, and the Philippines,” Berry said.

Since 1998 Berry has called Lunenburg County her home.

She and any other Democratic candidate will face a challenge, as the redrawn district has flipped. The current District 9 is considered the most heavily Democratic leaning district in Virginia. The new version, which takes effect after next November, is labeled as heavily Republican. This is due to the shift in which counties are represented. The next election will be held Nov. 7, 2023.

# SOLAR: After months, group achieves ‘little consensus’

FROM PAGE ONE

mitigation plan.

The bill relied on the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s definition of prime agricultural soils, which refers to soils that through their physical and chemical composition have high production capabilities without needing pesticides or fertilizer. Forest lands were similarly defined by state code.

The legislation arose out of ongoing conflict between the goals of the Virginia Clean Economy Act, which aims to decarbonize the state’s electric grid by 2050, and those of the farming and forestry sectors, which are concerned with the preservation of their lands. The VCEA mandates the development of 16,100 megawatts of solar. But because the renewable source is land-intensive — producing one megawatt of solar on average requires between five and 10 acres — it has given rise to tensions with agriculture and forestry, the state’s largest land-covering industries in the state.

The work group appears to have fallen short of resolving those conflicts. The report and interviews with members show discussions became bogged down on a range of issues, including definitions such as what constitutes a parcel of prime agricultural soil.

In particular, the solar industry has complained the law and new regulatory proposals single out solar farms for greater scrutiny than other development projects, like residential neighborhoods.

Webert argued that wasn’t the case, pointing to localities’ comprehensive plans — which are not binding — as an example of rules dictating where housing can go.

“The localities have a very large say (on) where that goes,” Webert said.

Chris Miller, president of the Piedmont Environmental Council and a proponent of Webert’s bill, said “no one’s arguing about the need for solar. This is about protecting a resource in Virginia.”

Besides failing to overcome policy disagreements, participants complained the state’s Freedom of Information Act rules governing public meetings stymied members from making headway on negotiations outside of the work group meetings.

“This was not supposed to be this complicated, but it got complicated real quick,” said Chip Dicks, a member of the work group representing the Chesapeake Solar and Storage Association.

Nikki Rovner, associate state director for the Nature Conservancy and a proponent of the legislation, said the group’s work should be seen as “more of a discovery exercise.”

Consensus “is what will happen next when the task will be to write a regulation,” she said.

## A SPRAWLING GROUP

The work group was composed of 94 members, with 41 primary members and 24 alternates from groups representing agriculture and forestry, the solar industry, environmental groups, utilities, local government and other interests.

Twenty-nine subject

matter experts and representatives of local governments also participated. DEQ administered the panel and enlisted the Institute for Engagement and Negotiation at the University of Virginia to facilitate the discussion at a cost of \$97,000.

“It’s one of the largest work groups I’ve personally been a part of,” Webert said.

Members were assigned to five different subgroups to devise different parts of the regulation, such as sections dealing with avoidance and minimization, mitigation, definitions of significant impacts and local control.

Altogether, the full work group met five times between June and September before producing the 717-page final report, a length DEQ Director of Air and Renewable Energy Mike Dowd said was “not common.”

“I think that speaks volumes of the very complex nature of the process we are going through,” said Dowd.

## CONSENSUS AND NO CONSENSUS

The group did agree on the definition for avoiding adverse impacts to prime agricultural soils or forested lands.

Members also agreed to ask a Virginia Cooperative Extension work group to propose an approach for verifying prime agricultural soils and forests, require DEQ to provide a copy of any notices of intent submitted by developers

to localities, and direct the Virginia Department of Energy to create a guidebook on best practices for solar development.

Agreement was more difficult on several other proposals related to expanding what it means to “disturb” land and “minimize” impact, requirements for mitigation plans and how payments made instead of mitigation efforts would flow.

Complicating the debate was the view among solar groups such as the Mid-Atlantic Renewable Energy Coalition that the law’s presumption that solar projects have significant adverse impacts on prime agricultural soils and forest lands is incorrect.

There also was disagreement over the meaning of “contiguous” lands, which some work group members said should not include swaths of forest that are connected only by a thin line of trees, such as buffers. Solar groups said including buffers in the calculation of acres that would trigger regulatory requirements could lead to many more forest lands being subject to such oversight.

Rovner of the Nature Conservancy pointed to the environmental benefits of forested land, including buffers, saying, “Water quality (protection) and carbon sequestering are provided regardless of whether part of the forest acreage is in the form of a buffer.”

enough to require mitigation. Once the top layer of prime agricultural soil is disturbed, the land’s crop production value declines, she argued.

Consequently, any developer who wants to convert land back to agricultural use later is “already behind,” Moore said.

## NEXT STEPS

Given the group’s inability to reach consensus on a host of issues, DEQ is looking to reconvene the body unless there are any changes to the legislation governing it. A final regulation is due by December 2024.

Webert said he wasn’t aware of any legislation that would change HB 206, and said ultimately DEQ or the General Assembly will have to determine the proper balance between competing interests.

“When each faction is vying for a limited resource, (then) consensus is going to be harder to reach,” Webert said.



**Quality Windows  
Precision Installation  
Guaranteed Satisfaction**

**Most Installations Done in One Day!  
Call for a free in-home consultation and estimate.**



**GRANT’S GLASS, INC.**  
3<sup>RD</sup> STREET FARMVILLE, VA  
434-392-5207  
GrantsGlassInc.com

**Financing Available  
For Qualified Buyers**

**KEEP YOUR POWER ON,  
EVEN WHEN THE POWER’S OUT**

**Kohler Automatic Standby Generator Offer**

- Hands-free Operation
- Premium Warranty
- Low Maintenance
- Corrosion-proof Enclosure

**Ellington Energy Services, Inc.**

1812 West Third Street Farmville, VA

434-392-3176 • 800-544-6113 • www.ellingtonenergyservices.com  
Residential • Commercial Sales & Service

**NEED AD HELP?**

Call us at  
**(434) 392-4151**

## LUNENBURG COUNTY PUBLIC NOTICE

The Lunenburg County Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on **Thursday, January 5th, 2023**, beginning at **7:00 PM** in the 2nd floor Courtroom; Lunenburg Courts Building, Lunenburg, VA 23952 for public input on the following:

- **CUP 7-22: Conditional Use Permit for Mayank Patel (Parham’s Stop)** to operate a Convenience Store on tax parcel 081-0A-0-56, 2087 South Hill Road, Kenbridge, VA 23944, consisting of 2.05 acres in an A-1 Agricultural zone.

It is the intention of the Lunenburg County Planning Commission to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Should you need special accommodations, please contact the County Administration office at 434-696-2142 prior to the meeting date.

Written comments will be appreciated, in lieu of oral presentations. Please send comments to [taylor@lunenburgva.gov](mailto:taylor@lunenburgva.gov) or Lunenburg County, Office of Planning and Economic Development, 11413 Courthouse Road, Lunenburg, VA 23952.

*Devoted To The Interests Of Lunenburg County*

# Company pulls out of deal with IDA

By Crystal Vandegrift  
*The K-V Dispatch*

A company that was interested in purchasing the former STEPS building has since pulled out of a deal with the Town of Victoria Industrial Development Authority (IDA).

Victoria Town Manager Rodney Newton confirmed that an out of state business was in talks with the IDA but that the deal has fallen through.

Newton did not discuss the name of the business or the reason the deal is no longer on the table.

Newton said the IDA is continuing to make needed repairs to the building and is exploring other options for

use of the building, including multiple tenants.

“The shop for public works is a consideration for a tenant, but that will ultimately be up to the IDA and the town council,” Newton said.

During the October Victoria Town Council, Newton told members that if funds had not been invested into the STEPS building, it would have been slated to be torn down.

According to town officials, the IDA has invested approximately \$235,000 for a new roof. And they are continuing with repairs to include new windows in the front of the building, filling in the pit in the production area floor and installing new lights in the area.



The Victoria Town Council is looking into the possibility of using the former STEPS building as the town's public works shop.

The total anticipated investment is scheduled to be around \$300,000 to \$325,000.

“We need a town shop,” Newton said. “If we went with leasing the building from the

IDA, it would cost \$26,000 a year.”

According to the October council minutes, Councilmember Johnnie Brame asked if the town would also continue to

use the old shop.

According to Newton, the shop would be torn down, land cleared, and then

See DEAL, Page 2



Photos by Ronald Card

## There's a Blood Moon on the rise

If you looked outside in the extremely early hours of Tuesday morning, you might have noticed the moon looked a bit different than normal. That's because it was a “Blood Moon”, a visual we won't be able to see again in full until 2025.

But first, what is a “Blood Moon”? Well, it happens when the moon is in a total lunar eclipse. The moon sits completely in Earth's shadow, with a tiny portion of light (from Earth's sunrise and sunset) falls on its surface. Now because these light waves are spread out, they look red. But they don't always look the same.

In fact, each “Blood Moon” gives a different visual. What do we mean? According to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration

(NASA), how red the moon looks during this event depends on three things. First, how much pollution is in the atmosphere at the time. The more pollution, the darker it will seem. Second, how much cloud cover is there. And third, how much debris there is in the atmosphere. Let's say a volcano erupts. All that ash sprays up into the atmosphere. If you're trying to look at the “Blood Moon” at that point, it'll look much darker than normal.

Retired photographer Ronald Card started taking pictures of the progression beginning at 3:15 a.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 8 and finished at 4:30 a.m.

NASA says the next partial “Blood Moon” that we can see will be on Oct. 28, 2023. The next full version will be on March 14, 2025.

## Habitat project expands across region

By Brian Carlton  
*The K-V Dispatch*

The partnership between Piedmont Habitat for Humanity and the Commonwealth Regional Council (CRC) is expanding. That means more affordable housing will be going up throughout our region over the next year.

Last week, we gave an update on the operation, which is set to be completed early next year. Now, we have an expansion to talk about. But first, let's explain how this came about.

### FINDING AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Based on a Dec. 2021 report by Virginia's Joint Legislative and Audit Review Commission (JLARC), 29% of households in the state struggle with housing costs. Nearly half of those spent more than 50% of their income on housing, both rental and owned. And as mentioned, it's a problem here locally. The study found 67% of households struggling with housing costs either lived in this region or in Northern Virginia.

So what's causing this problem? Housing prices keep rising. The median home sales price here in Virginia climbed 28% over the last five years, to \$270,000 at the end of 2021. In the last three years alone, Virginia's supply of “starter” homes has dropped by 40%, says the Virginia Realtors Association. Enter the Virginia Housing Development Authority (VHDA).

Created in 1972 by the Virginia General Assembly, the VHDA is a self-supporting nonprofit. Their goal is to help people get into affordable housing through different programs. In July 2021, five months before the JLARC study came out, Virginia Housing launched a new program. Instead of working with individuals, they gave \$40 million total to planning districts across the state. Each one received a specific amount and a deadline, when they needed to have construction finished.

The CRC, a planning district that includes Lunenburg, Prince Edward, Buckingham, Charlotte and Amelia counties, received \$2 million. That money was meant to build 20 homes, a project with a deadline of June 2024.

To help meet that deadline, the CRC reached out to several partners, asking for project ideas. The group received six applications and ended up awarding money to three projects, partnering with Piedmont Habitat for Humanity, the town of Blackstone and Smyth Properties LLC. Piedmont will build 11 homes, the town of Blackstone will help build three and Smyth will build six.

### HABITAT'S PORTION

Habitat's funding for 11 homes will now cover the cost for several modular homes in Nottoway County.

“Three will be going out in the town of Crewe in

See HABITAT, Page 2

## Chamber to sponsor holiday competition

By Crystal Vandegrift  
*The K-V Dispatch*

The Lunenburg County Chamber of Commerce will once again sponsor a Business Christmas Decorating Competition for businesses in Kenbridge and Victoria.

Judging will be held on Dec. 1 at 6:30 p.m. Deadline for entry forms to be sent in is Nov. 29 at 12 noon. Ribbons will be given for first, second,

and third place, as well as honorable mentions in each category. One first place winner will be chosen to win the tri-color ribbon.

“As President of the Chamber, I hope that all businesses take to the time to decorate for the Holiday Season and make our county festive,” Tony Matthews said.

Businesses can enter the completion in one of the following categories: Traditional

or Novelty.

If unsure as to which category to enter, call Bernice Thompson at (434) 676-8214.

Entry forms can be found on the Lunenburg County Chamber of Commerce's Facebook page and the Chamber website.

According to Matthews, contest forms will also be placed at post offices, libraries, doctor's offices, and dentist offices throughout the county.

Central remains undefeated  
Page 5

Advertising and news deadline:  
Friday at noon



## GET FRONT PAGE ATTENTION!!!

Attract maximum attention from our readers to your business with this full-color strip ad.

**AD RATES**  
start at just  
**\$50**

Get the details and reserve your ad today!  
Call 434-808-0613 or email [Debbie.Evans@KVDispatch.com](mailto:Debbie.Evans@KVDispatch.com)

# Supreme Court of Virginia says no to Dominion

By Sarah Vogel song  
Virginia Mercury

Utility regulators met state legal requirements in approving a charge added to Dominion Energy Virginia bills to pay for participation in a regional carbon market, the Supreme Court of Virginia ruled Thursday.

The charge, which equaled roughly \$2.39 extra on the monthly bill of the average residential customer, stopped being added to bills in July 2022.

Dominion, Virginia's largest electric utility, this May had asked the State Corporation Commission to suspend the charge in anticipation of Republican Gov. Glenn Youngkin's plans to withdraw the state from participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative. The commission approved the proposal in June.

RGGI, a multistate cap-and-trade system, requires power producers to purchase carbon allowances at auction for each ton of carbon they emit. The proceeds of auctions are then returned to participating states. The number of allowances available to producers declines annually.

The system is designed to incentivize power generators to switch from forms of energy that produce greenhouse gases that are driving climate change to non-carbon-emitting sources.

A 2020 law authorizing Virginia's participation in RGGI allowed Dominion to recover from ratepayers the "necessary" costs of buying allowances at auction.

In November 2020, shortly before Virginia power producers joined in their first auction, Dominion asked the SCC to approve its plans to recover roughly \$168 million to buy allowances through July 31, 2022. The utility had calculated this amount would cover the allowances necessary to comply with RGGI as well as backup allowances to provide flexibility if auction prices became volatile. Regulators approved the request the following year.

Environmental nonprofit Appalachian Voices appealed the decision, arguing that regulators hadn't properly vetted Dominion's proposal because their review hadn't shown all the costs were necessary.

Appalachian Voices contended that only the lowest possible allowance costs could be considered necessary under the statute, and that because the SCC hadn't asked Dominion to develop a least-cost plan for complying with the law, it hadn't met the "necessity" standard.

"While the argument has a persuasive tenor, there is no statutory or regulatory text supporting it," wrote Justice D. Arthur Kelsey in the opinion for the court. He

determined that it was "the necessity to comply with applicable laws or regulations that matters" and said regulations crafted as a result of the law required Dominion to purchase allowances.

Dominion "did just that," Kelsey wrote. "The costs are recoverable, therefore, because they were necessary to comply with (Dominion's) statutory duty to purchase allowances for every short ton of CO2 emitted from its power plants."

The court also noted the State Corporation Commission separately ordered Dominion to develop a least-cost plan for meeting carbon reduction goals as part of its review of the utility's compliance with the Virginia Clean Economy Act, a landmark 2020 law that sets a pathway for Dominion and Appalachian Power Company to decarbonize by midcentury.

Will Cleveland, an attorney with the Southern Environmental Law Center who represented Appalachian Voices before the Virginia Supreme Court, said the group was "disappointed in the result, but it is ultimately the Supreme Court who decides what the statutes mean."

"We continue to believe that the most effective implementation of RGGI is one that imposes a least-cost standard, and we will continue to advocate for that in whatever way we can," he said.

Jeremy Slayton, a spokesman for Dominion,

said the company was "pleased with the

decision, which speaks for itself."

**Financing Available For Qualified Buyers**

**KEEP YOUR POWER ON, EVEN WHEN THE POWER'S OUT**



**Kohler Automatic Standby Generator Offer**

- Hands-free Operation
- Premium Warranty
- Low Maintenance
- Corrosion-proof Enclosure

**Ellington Energy Services, Inc.**  
1812 West Third Street  
Farmville, VA

434-392-3176 • 800-544-6113 • [www.ellingtonenergyservices.com](http://www.ellingtonenergyservices.com)  
Residential • Commercial Sales & Service

## HABITAT: Three homes set to go up in Nottoway County

FROM PAGE ONE

Nottoway and three in Charlotte County," said Sam Rabon. He works as Director of Resource Development for Piedmont Habitat. "We just have to do the site development with some land clearing and get the foundations put in, so they're ready."

That work will be completed over the next six months. First, Habitat will work to finish five homes in Prince Edward County. Then they'll turn to focus on Crewe and finally, later in 2023, they'll work on three homes in Charlotte County.

Now when we say a home will be placed, we mean exactly that. Habitat is trying out a different method of assembling a house, thanks to some help from Cardinal Homes. The Charlotte County based company is building modular homes, prefabricated buildings that come in sections. Rabon said in this case, with a deadline to meet, modular homes just made sense.

"It allows us to serve more families in the same timeframe," Rabon said. "We'll still be building homes from the ground up. But we're working with partners.

These are built to the same standards as we would if built on site. We feel really good about the product."

### STILL ROOM FOR VOLUNTEERS

Even with the prefabricated work, Rabon said there will be plenty of work left for volunteers.

"There will still be plenty of opportunities once the homes have been delivered," Rabon said. "There will still be work to be completed by Habitat construction staff and volunteers, including finish carpentry, cabinets, porches, and landscaping."

## DEAL: IDA still seeking occupants

FROM PAGE ONE

marketed for commercial use. Council agreed to table the discussion until its November meeting for further discussion.

Last year, the IDA was working to secure a grant to help repair a former manufacturing building. Sadly, that grant was turned down in December.

Despite being overlooked for the Local Innovation Fund grant from the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, the IDA began work on the former STEPS building located at 300 Court St., on the western edge of town.

In a deal negotiated with the Lunenburg County IDA, the Town of Victoria IDA took possession of the former manufacturing facility

early in 2021.

STEPS discontinued using the facility more than two years ago.

Before STEPS, the building initially housed

Diemolding Corporation and Southern Virginia Plastics, both of which manufactured plastic components of cookware.

**Leaf Filter**  
GUTTER PROTECTION

**BACKED BY A YEAR-ROUND CLOG-FREE GUARANTEE**



**EXCLUSIVE LIMITED TIME OFFER!**

**20% OFF + 10% OFF**

YOUR ENTIRE PURCHASE SENIORS & MILITARY!

**FINANCING THAT FITS YOUR BUDGET!**

USA **Promo Code: 285**

FREE GUTTER ALIGNMENT + FREE GUTTER CLEANING\*

**CALL US TODAY FOR A FREE ESTIMATE**

**1-877-614-6667**

Mon-Thurs: 8am-11pm, Fri-Sat: 8am-5pm, Sun: 2pm-5pm EST

A COMPANY OF LEAFHOME

\*For those who qualify. One coupon per household. No obligation estimate valid for 1 year. \*\*Offer valid at time of estimate only. The leading consumer reporting agency conducted a 16 month outdoor test of gutter guards in 2019 and recognized LeafFilter as the "1" rated professionally installed gutter guard system in America! Manufactured in Pleasant, Michigan and processed at LHM Mercer Group in Ohio. See Representative for full warranty details. Registration# 036920022, CS# 1032795, Registration# 036920022, License# 26200403, License# 26200403, License# 219621296, License# MRIC11225, Registration# 176447, License# 421339, Registration# 9717104, License# 55145, License# 420393, Registration# 1764591300, Registration# 111114, License# 115294, Registration# P405193, License# 41154, License# 7051094, #10783658-5501, License# 421331, License# 27016945, License# LEAFHOME22, License# W056912.



**WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN US**

**Third Wednesday Of Each Month**

**Health Series**

**Wednesday, November 16, 2022 @ 12 PM**

at the

**Robert Russa Moton Museum**

**900 Griffin Blvd., Farmville, VA 23901**

---

November 16, 2022 **Erin M. Baird, DNP, MBA, MS, CNM**  
Executive Medical Director of Women's & Children's Services

Light Refreshments Served



Southside Community Hospital

Bought To You By:

The Farmville Area Chamber of Commerce & Centra Southside Community Hospital





**Trinity Memorial Gardens**

*Serving families since 1960*

**The area's finest perpetual care cemetery**

If you own spaces at Trinity Memorial Gardens and have not already done so, please contact us to schedule an appointment to update your records. It should only take 15-20 minutes of your time. Please call 434-392-3008.

**To schedule an appointment or more information, call 392-3008**

**[www.trinitymgva.com](http://www.trinitymgva.com)**

*Devoted To The Interests Of Lunenburg County*

# Why is my tax bill so high?

By Crystal Vandegrift and Brian Carlton  
*The K-V Dispatch*

Just about every county in the Commonwealth has been struggling with the burden of higher personal property taxes for its citizens.

Lunenburg County is no different.

However, county officials became aware of the expect-

ed increase in rates and took action.

In late 2021, Commissioner of the Revenue Liz Hamlett became aware of the expected increase informing the County Administrator and Board of Supervisors of the prediction.

“Together, we explored possible options to lower the tax burden for Lunenburg citizens for the unprecedented appreciation in vehicle values,”

Hamlett said.

According to Hamlett, she uses the “Clean Loan” value listed in the pricing guides, which is less than the “Clean Trade-in” value, and the recommended action was to reduce the ratio used against the assessed value according to the J.D. Power pricing guide for four classifications of personal property to 85% to calculate the personal property

tax levy which is provided for in the Code of Virginia. Hamlett said the county personal property classes for motorcycles, passenger vehicles, travel trailers and recreational vehicles/motor homes are taxed at the same rate as all other classes of personal property at a rate of \$3.80/\$100.

“Those four classes of vehicles went up in value over 25% of the prior year,” Ham-

lett said.

However, those four classes were granted a percent of value reduction to 85% of assessed value by the Board of Supervisors.

## HOW DOES MY TAX BILL WORK?

A city or county doesn't set the value of your vehicle. That's what drives the bill you

See TAX, Page 2



## Mask lawsuit ends in Virginia

By Brian Carlton  
*The K-V Dispatch*

When Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin took office, he signed Executive Order 2. The bill stripped school districts like Lunenburg of the ability to require community masking as a way to prevent a COVID-19 outbreak. Basically, schools could no longer require students to wear masks. That will be changing, as the result of a court case.

On Monday, Dec. 12, a settlement was reached in the case of Christopher Seaman vs. The Commonwealth of Virginia. Almost immediately after Youngkin signed Executive Order 2, multiple parents filed a lawsuit, arguing that requiring masks is a right covered by federal disability laws. The U.S. District Court for the Western District of Virginia agreed. Rather than appeal, state officials came to a settlement on Monday.

As part of the deal, letters went out to all of the districts where children represented in the case attend school. Those letters say if a parent asks, the district has to require both children and teachers to wear masks, in order to stay in compliance with federal disability laws. The same goes for Lunenburg and all other

districts. If a parent requests in writing for masks to be mandated due to their child's disability, then districts will be required to make that happen.

“The (Americans with Disabilities Act) and Rehabilitation Act forbid discrimination on the basis of disability and require schools to make reasonable modifications to their policies and practices to accommodate students with disabilities,” the settlement says.

Now to be clear, this isn't a permanent change. The settlement does go into effect immediately, but it only remains in effect as long as any of the plaintiff students attend a Virginia public school. As most of the children involved are in elementary school, that will be at least until 2030.

“We're hopeful that every school in Virginia will view this settlement as a sign that they should make similar accommodations for their students, even if they are not part of the case,” said Eden Heilman. She serves as legal director for the ACLU of Virginia.

### THE LAW BEHIND THE CASE

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act,

public schools cannot exclude students with disabilities, deny them equal access to their education, or segregate them unnecessarily. They are also obligated to provide reasonable modifications to policies, practices, and procedures to give students with disabilities an equal opportunity to benefit from their public education.

“Keeping students safe is a core tenet of every school in the Commonwealth, and we're pleased to see the Youngkin administration recognize it as such with today's settlement,” said Colleen Miller, executive director, disAbility Law Center.

The parents of the plaintiff students are represented by the ACLU of Virginia, the Washington Lawyers' Committee, Brown, Goldstein & Levy, the disAbility Law Center of Virginia, and Arnold & Porter.

“We are proud to have stood up for these parents and their children for the right to equal access to school,” said Eve Hill, partner at Brown, Goldstein & Levy in a statement. “No school in Virginia should risk the life and health of students with disabilities by refusing to require masking when necessary.”

## Mantez faces murder charges

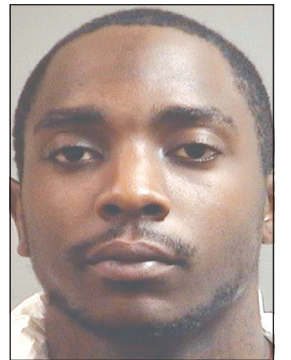
By Crystal Vandegrift  
*The K-V Dispatch*

A Lunenburg man was in court last week facing first-degree murder charges in the slaying of Marjureka White-Jennings.

According to court documents, a jury trial began in Lunenburg County Court on Monday, Dec. 5, in the case against Thomas Mantez who was charged with the December 2019 murder of his girlfriend.

Authorities found White-Jennings lying in blood on the floor with multiple stab wounds the night of Tuesday, Dec. 31, at her residence on Lunenburg County Road.

The woman's 28-year-old boyfriend, Thomas Mantez III, was arrested at the scene and charged with Assault and Battery of a Family Member for an offense that allegedly occurred the night before.



Thomas Mantez

Mantez was indicted Monday, Feb. 3, 2020 by the Lunenburg County Grand Jury for first-degree murder, shooting/stabbing in the commission of a felony, use of a firearm in commission of a murder and possession of a firearm by a convicted violent felon.

As of press time on Tuesday, Dec. 13, the court system documents have not updated the outcome of Mantez's trial.

## Two years later, cell tower still delayed

By Crystal Vandegrift  
*The K-V Dispatch*

More than two years ago, the Lunenburg Board of Supervisors (BOS) approved a conditional use permit (CUP) application for a Verizon Wireless Cell Tower in hopes of moving the county further in its quest for better communication.

And the wait still continues.

Verizon has constructed and will operate the 299-foot wireless communication tower near Plank Road and Wallace Bridge Road.

At that time, Jeff Holland with Verizon addressed the board, telling supervisors that the company had received a lot of community support for the tower, “With a lot of people now working from home and schools learning virtually now, it's a high demand more than ever.” Holland said during the November 12, 2020, BOS meeting.

### A CELL TOWER UPDATE

During the Thursday, Dec. 8, BOS meeting, the issues were again addressed when supervisor Robert Zava asked

See TOWER, Page 2

**Holiday paint party supports charity**  
Page 10

**Advertising and news deadline:**  
Friday at noon



## Call Now for Holiday Advertising Specials!

Greetings Starting At \$50.00  
Deadline Dec. 15th

Show clients and community how much you value their support with an ad in our Holiday Greetings edition on December 21. We offer a variety of ad sizes and discount packages to fit your budget, so contact us today to get started!

Call or Email Today!  
434-392-4151  
Debbie.Evans@KVDispatch.com

# The beauty of dry stacked stone walls

Throughout New England and the mountains in Virginia, there are stone walls built by farmers primarily from the mid-1700s until the early 1800s. There used to be 250,000 miles of stone walls in just Vermont. Even today, a walk through a patch of woodland is likely to reveal remnants of several stone walls.

The walls served two purposes — to mark boundaries and as a place to collect all the stones that appeared in fields every spring. The old timers said that the endless supply of stones was put there by the devil.

Most of these walls were simple affairs, only thigh high at most and dry stacked, meaning without the use of cement to provide

permanence. And yet, a certain amount of art was required to stack the stones in such a way that the wall was solid, capable of withstanding repeated freezing and thawing. As time passed, the stones darkened and became covered with moss and lichens. They seemed to become part of the earth itself.

Sometimes the stones were just stacked on the ground in almost random piles, but at other times sturdier construction techniques were used. What to do? Dig a trench about six inches deep and as wide as the finished wall is going to be. Add a layer of crushed stone to provide drainage and help prevent heaving. Beginning with large stones, stack stones on this base. Use smaller stones to fill in

gaps between the large ones. Continue adding stones until the desired height of the wall is reached and then finish off the top with relatively flat stones. Traditionally the large stones were called “two handers,” and the small ones were called “one handers.” Over time, a new stone wall becomes covered with moss and seems to become one with nature.

Gardeners are discovering the beauty of dry stacked stone walls. They mark boundaries and serve as unobtrusive backgrounds for plants. They are attractive even when in ruins. There’s nothing prettier than a rustic stone wall bordering hydrangeas or a woodland garden.

Dr. Cynthia Wood is a master gardener. Her



This new dry stacked stone wall has a base of crushed stone and flat rocks on top, giving it stability and a more carefully planned appearance.

email address is cynthia.crewe23930@gmail.com.



This old dry stacked stone wall is more of a jumble of stones without too much thought as to the placement of the stones.

# TAX: ‘We explored possible options to lower the tax burden’

FROM PAGE ONE

get. They have to use the values from a recognized pricing guide. Prince Edward County, for example, uses the National Auto Dealers Association (NADA). They take the vehicle’s VIN number, type it in and get the value NADA assigns.

Here’s the first point where cities and counties get a choice. They have to determine which value to go with. They can choose the retail value of a car, the trade-in value, or the loan value. Retail value is the price if you want to go and purchase it off the lot. A trade-in value is a price you’d get if you try to trade the car in at a dealership. The loan value is what the bank would give if you tried to borrow against the car or truck. According to NADA, the loan value is considered the lowest.

Cities and counties have the option to pick any of these three. Prince Edward County uses loan value. Some areas, like Appomattox, use trade-in value. Once they pick one of the three, the city or county applies their tax rate to that value in order to determine how much a person owes. That means even if a city or county’s tax rate goes down, the tax bill also spikes if that value climbs. And the value of all used cars has gone up dramatically over the last year.

## WHY DID CAR PRICES CLIMB?

Due to the shortage of new vehicles as a result of the economic impacts of COVID-19,

vehicles appreciated in value rather than depreciating from the prior year’s assessed value based on the data received from the J.D. Power pricing guide.

Hamlett said, Among other things, some events that led to the appreciation of vehicle values are:

In March of 2020, the Federal Reserve cut the interest rates to nearly 0%. These unprecedented low-interest rates on both new and pre-owned vehicles allowed consumers to purchase them sooner than they would have. Strong demand means higher prices.

The “COVID-19” related closing of certain auto manufacturing plants for the necessary production of ventilators and other Personal Protective Equipment caused a further reduction in inventory.

Large fleet companies (E.g., rental agencies and car services) chose not to replace inventory, adding to the shortage

of pre-owned vehicles in the market.

“Unfortunately, J.D. Power has advised that the values will be slow to return to pre-COVID-19 values and they anticipate a slow decline over several years.” Hamlett said.

According to NADA and Kelly Blue Book, auto manufacturers built 1.7 million fewer vehicles in 2021 compared to 2019. And that deficit hasn’t been fixed yet, thanks to one tiny issue.

It’s a computer chip problem. The pieces needed to produce new cars aren’t getting to the manufacturer. Take General Motors, for example. In order to produce new cars, they’ve suspended heated seats as a feature because the computer chips to make them work aren’t in stock.

Beyond shipping, the computer chips aren’t being built in the quantities needed. Ukraine produces 25% of the world’s supply of neon. That neon gas is used

to make semiconductor chips. No gas means no chips. And no chips means fewer new cars.

As a result, the value of used vehicles keeps spiking. Kelly Blue Book’s data shows as of April, prices for used cars had spiked 28% higher than in 2021. As things slowly get back to normal, that’s changing.

As of Monday, Oct. 31, the latest numbers show that price growth was just 11% higher than last year. Just don’t expect a fix coming soon. At the World Economic Forum, Intel CEO Pat Gelsinger cautioned that supply problems with computer chips will likely last into 2024.

For local residents, that means you can expect a bit of sticker shock on the assessed value of your vehicle at least a while longer.

# TOWER: ‘These issues are working to be remedied’

FROM PAGE ONE

about the status.

According to the Director of Planning and Economic Development, Taylor Newton, Verizon has had issues with equipment supplies, delaying the cell tower’s start-up.

“They (Verizon) have had issues with obtaining equipment and fiber due to the high demand and delay in shipping/receiving,” Newton said. “These issues are working to be remedied so that the tower can go live in the immediate months.”

In an interview with Karen Schulz, Global Network and Technology Communications with Verizon, Schulz said the company anticipates that work will be completed in the first half of 2023.

“We are very excited about the new cell site we have built in Lunenburg County, which will enhance the 4G LTE coverage and capacity for customers in the area,” Schulz said. “The last step before activating the site is to connect it with fiber optic cables to the rest of the network.”

So, citizens will have to continue to wait for better cell coverage in the county, at least heading into the new year.



## PUBLIC HEARING

The Kenbridge Town Council will hold a public hearing beginning at 6:50 p.m. on Tuesday, December 20, 2022 at the Kenbridge Town Hall council chambers, RM 200 to receive public comments on the following:

Town of Kenbridge – Proposed amendment of the current Enterprise Zone map to include an additional 57.12 acres. A copy of the map of the proposed changes will be available at the Town Hall office.

It is the intention of the Kenbridge Town Council to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Should anyone need special accommodations, please contact the Town Office prior to the meeting at 434-676-2452.

Tony Matthews-Kenbridge Town Manager



BACKED BY A YEAR-ROUND CLOG-FREE GUARANTEE

BEFORE LeafFilter



AFTER LeafFilter



EXCLUSIVE LIMITED TIME OFFER!

**20% OFF + 10% OFF**

YOUR ENTIRE PURCHASE SENIORS & MILITARY!

FINANCING THAT FITS YOUR BUDGET!

FREE GUTTER ALIGNMENT + FREE GUTTER CLEANING\*

CALL US TODAY FOR A FREE ESTIMATE

**1-877-614-6667**

\*For those who qualify. One coupon per household. No obligation estimate valid for 1 year. \*\*Offer valid at time of estimate only. The leading consumer reporting agency conducted a 16 month outdoor test of gutter guards in 2019 and recognized LeafFilter as the #1 rated professionally installed gutter guard system in America! Manufactured in Pleasanton, Michigan and processed at LMF Mercer Group in Ohio. See Representative for full warranty details. Registration# 036920022 C/O# 103795 Registration# 06369005 License# 07056276 License# 021504 Registration# 037703 License# 00564 License# 022314 License# 21021296 License# 26200022 License# 26200403 License# 219621296 License# MRC 11225 Registration# 176447 License# 421330 Registration# 9171504 License# 51145 License# 420013 Registration# 17040501300 Registration# 413114 License# 316296 Registration# 14001003 License# 41304 License# 7051049 #19783636 License# 413131 License# 27016945 License# LEAFNRMR22 License# W056912

**Financing Available For Qualified Buyers**

# KEEP YOUR POWER ON, EVEN WHEN THE POWER'S OUT



**Kohler Automatic Standby Generator Offer**

- Hands-free Operation
- Premium Warranty
- Low Maintenance
- Corrosion-proof Enclosure

**Ellington Energy Services, Inc.**  
1812 West Third Street  
Farmville, VA

434-392-3176 • 800-544-6113 • www.ellingtonenergyservices.com  
Residential • Commercial Sales & Service