

Central Virginia marks Memorial Day, PAGE A3



Lady Govs top Dan River ahead of postseason push, PAGE B1

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Officials review transportation data, talk development priorities

Newest draft chapters of the county's comprehensive plan address future land use and transportation in the county

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At a recent work session Nelson County officials reviewed some of the last — and arguably most important — draft chapters of

the county's new comprehensive plan: chapters addressing land use and future development, and transportation.

The plan is a framework for future growth, and Nelson County has contracted with Bridgewater consulting firm the Berkley Group to help author a new document to guide county decision-making up until 2042. Virginia code dictates that a county have a comprehensive plan and that it be reviewed every five years; Nelson's current plan was adopted in 2002 and last updated in 2014.

The draft land use chapter, chapter six of the comprehensive plan, identifies assets and con-

straints to development in 16 Nelson areas. Lovingston and Nellysford are both listed as having the most development assets but some development constraints. Colleen, Gladstone and Schuyler have water and sewer service but fewer assets, and few to none of the identified constraints to development (steep slopes, floodplain, limited or untested septic suitability, and protected landscapes).

The consultants group Nelson areas together into categories to guide future land use. Consultants grouped Nellysford and



PAIGE DINGLER, THE NELSON COUNTY TIMES

Please see **PLAN**, Page A2 The Lovingston Street Festival in Nelson County on Saturday, Oct. 22, 2022.



PAIGE DINGLER NEWS & ADVANCE

Honor graduate Ethan Holm smiles at peers during graduation at Nelson County High School on Friday, May 26, 2023.

Strong-willed, spirited, resilient

Class of 2023 looks forward at graduation

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Nelson County High School's graduating class of 2023 celebrated an achievement Friday unlike any graduating class before them.

Co-salutatorian Kira Tuttle told family, friends and neigh-

bors filling bleachers at the high school's football field, "When our freshman year was cut short due to COVID, I think it's safe to say that many of us felt anxious about what the future held. We didn't know when or if we'd be returning to school or what school would look like when we did come back.

"I remember my Algebra II teacher specifically telling my class she'd see us on Monday for our unit test because COVID probably wasn't a big deal, when that Friday actually ended up being the last time any of us saw each other for almost a year," Tuttle said.

Honor graduate Ethan Holm summed up that unprecedented four years for his classmates: freshman year cut short by

COVID-19 in March, sophomore year virtual, junior year masked and socially distanced, and finally, "this year has been our first but last normal year of high school."

But speakers talked about the conclusion of those difficult four years with humor, victory, grace and gratitude.

"The class of 2023 is nothing if

Please see **GRADUATION**, Page A2

'Essential but unseen work'; Delegate Hudson honors Nelson nonprofit

Commends Central Virginia Farmworkers Initiative for service to migrant worker community

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Del. Sally Hudson, D-Charlottesville, said commending resolutions — such as the one she presented to the Nelson County nonprofit Central Farm Workers Initiative (CVFWI) — are meant to honor extraordinary people and groups, and that "CVFWI certainly qualifies."

Hudson traveled to the nonprofit's office in Massies Mill on May 22 to give a copy of House Resolution 469 to founder and president Vanessa Hale, also meeting the CVFWI staff and talking priorities with Hale.

The resolution, which Hudson sponsored, commends CVFWI's advocacy work on behalf of seasonal farmworkers in the region. Every year hundreds of migrant workers travel to the county, mostly from Mexico, to work on temporary visas for local growers during the spring-summer season.

Hale's nonprofit has helped

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Graduation

From A1

not strong-willed, spirited, and most of all resilient," Tuttle said.

Valedictorian Sophia Ogilvie finished her high school career with a 5.132 GPA, and reflected on the positives that came from adversity.

"...[I] think we are all better for having lived through the pandemic during high school. One of the most valuable lessons we learned during high school was resilience. The pandemic taught us to be flexible and adapt to all of the new situations we were faced with."

Ogilvie also said her class' temporary separation gave them a greater appreciation for each other.

"We live in a country that is extremely divided right now, but we have created a community. Even though there is division in just about every other aspect of our lives, we created a school community in which everyone is treated with dignity and respect," she said.

School Board Chair Shannon Powell said to a class headed for college, trade school, military service, and the workforce: "The class of 2023 showed us what school pride and spirit looked like, how to give back to your community, and most importantly what excelling looks like in the academics, in the arts, in the athletics and career technical programs and contests and students who are already out in the workforce."

"You are an incredibly accomplished class, but most importantly you're people making a difference everyday."

Matthew Drumheller tied with Tuttle for valedictorian, both students earning a 5.0 GPA. His message to his classmates was to continue persevering; "You



PAIGE DINGLER PHOTOS, NELSON COUNTY TIMES

Students sit during graduation at Nelson County High School on Friday, May 26, 2023.



A graduate wears a decorated cap during graduation at Nelson County High School on Friday, May 26, 2023.



Students throw caps during graduation at Nelson County High School on Friday, May 26, 2023.

"You are unique because you are Nelson County. This beautiful community has built you, or at least it has me. From the western regions of Montebello with Crabtree Falls, to the eastern area of Schuyler and its quarries. To the top of Afton mountain and its vineyards, to Gladstone in the south with the James River and at the heart of this community, this county, is its school, situated in Lovingston with the beautiful mountains watching over us. I ask you to stop and look around and see the greatness surrounding you today?"

make your own path."

At the end of his speech,

he addressed the crowd

surrounding him.



PHOTO COURTESY OF STEPHANIE GROSS

Pictured left to right: The Central Virginia Farm Workers Initiative Jasmin Lopez, Vanessa Hale, Wilson Tosta and Del. Sally Hudson are pictured in the old Odd Fellows Hall in Massies Mill, the home of "la Iniciativa". Hudson was visiting to present House Resolution No. 469 for the nonprofit's work with seasonal farm workers.

Nonprofit

From A1

provide health care and education resources for these workers since 2020, and in 2021, CVFWI helped achieve a 95% vaccination rate for Nelson County farmworkers, organizing mass vaccination sites in coordination with local growers, the Blue Ridge Health District and the UVA Latino Health Initiative.

Promoting health care for migrant workers is CVFWI's main priority, and Hale and her team were planning to make health checks the next day at nearby migrant congregate housing sites. Hale explained staff do screenings for diabetes and hypertension during the checks, and connect workers with health care resources in the

community. CVFWI also offers English-language instruction, digital literacy, tax preparation and heat training workshops.

Hudson said her office has been trying to celebrate groups doing "essential but unseen work" in the region, presenting similar commendation resolutions to the Albemarle County Public School Child Nutrition Program and Literacy Volunteers of Charlottesville/Albemarle, who provide English language and citizenship test tutoring.

"This does mean a lot to me," Hale said, also expressing gratitude to the Nelson County Community Development Foundation for its continued grant support, and to the migrant workers she serves, who donated money to help grant the organization 501(c)(3) status.

Plan

From A1

Lovingston together, calling them Nelson's "largest communities" with the highest concentrations of current development. Their primary future land use types include single-family detached and attached residencies, apartments, duplexes, hotels, offices, businesses, parks and retail among other uses.

Officials took issue with lumping these two communities together.

"The people that I know in Nellysford think that they are overdeveloped, but that's not true for Lovingston. I would say that part of the plan should be concentration on Lovingston and not so much Nellysford..." Supervisors Skip Barton said.

Board Chair Jesse Rutherford and Supervisor Ernie Reed, who have the two communities in their districts, weighed in.

"...[T]hese are all really great options with our proximity to the 29 corridor... I think all this is pretty reflective of Lovingston and what Lovingston would want," Rutherford said of the county seat.

"The problem is that our goals for them are very different, and so to have them lumped together appears that the goals are the same..." Reed said.

Berkeley Group Principal Planner Catherine Redfearn asked the group if it wanted to promote growth more in Lovingston than Nellysford, and officials responded yes.

The group also reviewed draft transportation chapter four, which includes maps of existing roads and their annual average daily traffic volume.

U.S. 29 unsurprisingly has the greatest volume of traffic at more than 10,000 average daily vehicles; the Nellysford to Beech Grove Road portion of Virginia 151 gets 2000 to 4,000 daily vehicles; and Virginia 6 averages 4,000 to 6,000



NELSON COUNTY TIMES FILE PHOTO

Bold Rock Hard Cider's Barrel Barn in Nellysford is pictured.

vehicles daily. Most other county roads are at 0 to 2,000 daily vehicles on an annual average.

A map of the 2,327 automobile crashes that occurred in Nelson County between 2015 to 2022 shows the highest volume of crashes occurred at intersections along U.S. 29: with Virginia 56 in Colleen, at the Lovingston traffic light, and at River Road; and a fourth high volume spot at the Virginia 250 and Afton Mountain Road intersection. Of those crashes, the Berkeley Group reported 184 involved drivers or pedestrians who had been drinking alcohol prior to the incident.

The top three priority transportation projects in the draft chapter are the roundabout at River Road and Virginia 151 — currently ranked ninth in the Lynchburg VDOT District ranking of priority projects and slated for funding — followed by safety improvements to U.S. 29 (widening the shoulders at sections and adding rumbling strips), and a Virginia 151 traffic study to evaluate for traffic and pedestrian safety improvements. VDOT is currently conducting a study of a 14-mile section of the corridor around Nellysford to develop updated

safety improvement recommendations.

Officials set a final work session for June 29 at 6 p.m. The Nelson County Planning Commission, board of supervisors and county staff will review draft chapter nine of the comprehensive plan, which provides a

framework for implementing the plan, and will also review the plan in its entirety.

All chapter drafts are available for view on the Nelson comprehensive plan website, nelson2042.com under the "Document Library" tab.

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