

COLLEGE FOOTBALL



Player features previewing LU, Oregon's Fiesta Bowl matchup. **SPORTS, C1**



LYNCHBURG

NEARLY A CENTURY IN COMMUNITY

A look at College Lake Dam's history in the city, plans moving forward. **LOCAL, B1**

The News & Advance

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2023 YEAR IN REVIEW

LOOKING BACK



PAIGE DINGLER, THE NEWS & ADVANCE

Kingston Campbell's dad, Chris Campbell, wears a shirt with Kingston on it during the Peacemakers and city leaders news conference on 16th and Floyd streets on June 15, 2023. Kingston was one of three children who were victims of gun violence in Lynchburg in 2023.



JUSTIN FAULCONER, THE NEWS & ADVANCE

Amherst County Public Schools Superintendent William Wells (center) speaks at a news conference Dec. 13, 2023, about an incident involving fentanyl at Central Elementary School. At left is Amherst County Public Safety Director Brad Beam. At right is Amherst County Sheriff's Office Lt. Dallas Hill.



PAIGE DINGLER, THE NEWS & ADVANCE

Community members, teachers and students hold signs during the Lynchburg City School Board meeting on Sept. 19, 2023, where school closures were discussed.



PAIGE DINGLER, THE NEWS & ADVANCE

The Matts Creek wildfire is seen from Big Island on Nov. 15, 2023. The wildfire would eventually spread through just more than 11,000 acres in Bedford and Rockbridge counties.



PAIGE DINGLER, THE NEWS & ADVANCE

A celebration of life was held for slain Wintergreen Police Officer Mark Christopher "Chris" Wagner II at the Augusta Expo Event Center in Fishersville on Monday, June 26, 2023.

Lynchburg area's top stories of 2023

FROM STAFF REPORTS

As 2023 draws to a close, the staff of The News & Advance took time to reflect on the news and events that shaped our community.

Each year, we cull through the headlines to create a list of news that in some way influenced the character of Lynchburg

and the counties of Amherst, Appomattox, Bedford and Nelson. The headlines are then narrowed to a list of 10, plus a few honorable mentions we just couldn't leave out.

In this section, you will find our top picks, including the censures that resulted from a divided Lynchburg City Council, the wildfire that burned more than 11,000

acres and Liberty University's dream season that took them all the way to the Fiesta Bowl in Arizona.

For more images and stories of the people and events that characterized 2023, visit News Advance.com.

Please see **2023**, Page A3

MORE YEAR IN REVIEW COVERAGE: A look back at 2023 in pop culture, plus the year's top books, TV shows, movies, music and video games. **THE BURG, SECTION D**
News & Advance photographer Paige Dingler curates a collection of her favorites photos of 2023. **A4** Feel-good stories from a tumultuous year. **A5.**

World saw rapid clean-power growth in 2023 despite economic roadblocks

ISABELLA O'MALLEY, JENNIFER MCDERMOTT AND ALEXA ST. JOHN
The Associated Press

Led by new solar power, the world added renewable energy at breakneck speed in 2023, a trend that if amplified will help Earth turn away from fossil fuels and prevent severe warming and its effects.

Clean energy is often now the least expensive, explaining some of the growth. Nations also adopted policies that support renewables, some citing energy security concerns, according to the International Energy Agency. These

factors countered high interest rates and persistent challenges in getting materials and components in many places.

The IEA projected that more than 440 gigawatts of renewable energy would be added in 2023, more than the entire installed power capacity of Germany and Spain together.

Here's a look at the year in solar, wind and batteries.

Another banner year for solar
China, Europe and the U.S. each set

Please see **CLEAN**, Page A10

New General Assembly seeks swift election to fill SCC judge vacancies

MICHAEL MARTZ
Richmond Times-Dispatch

RICHMOND — Is help finally coming for the Virginia State Corporation Commission?

With two of the commission's three seats vacant and Democrats now controlling both chambers at the Capitol, legislative leaders expect the General Assembly to move swiftly to elect two new judges, potentially in the week after the legislature convenes on Jan. 10.

The SCC, created as a constitutionally independent body in 1902 to regulate some of the biggest businesses in Virginia,

has been operating without a full panel of judges since early 2022 because of a political stalemate that began in 2018 after the retirement of Judge Jimmy Dimitri. Earlier this year, Dimitri came out of retirement to serve as a replacement judge to ensure that the commission would have a quorum to operate until the assembly elected judges to fill the vacancies.

"We've absolutely got to get people into those positions," said Sen. Creigh Deeds, D-Charlottesville, who will become chairman of the Senate Commerce

Please see **JUDGES**, Page A10

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Mostly sunny
High 53 • Low 35
FORECAST • A12

Inside

Classifieds	D12, 13	Local & State	B1	Opinion	A7, 8
Crossword	D8, 11	Lottery	A2	Sports	C1
Kid News	D6	Obituaries	B2, 3	The Burg	D1



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