



Happy Thanksgiving



THE SMITHFIELD TIMES

SERVING ISLE OF WIGHT AND SURRY COUNTIES SINCE 1920

Volume 104 Number 48

Wednesday, November 22, 2023

75 cents

www.SmithfieldTimes.com

Smithfield, Va. 23430

Planners back revised Grange plan

By Stephen Faleski
Staff Writer

A retooled plan for the Grange at 10Main with 37 fewer residences hasn't placated all opponents of the mixed-use development. It did,

however, persuade Planning Commissioner Thomas Pope, who had opposed components of the original project, to this time join with the other members of the advisory body on Nov. 14 to unanimously recommend approval for developer

Joseph Luter IV's application for mixed-use zoning and six related special use permits.

Luter in September had asked to withdraw his application for a version of the Grange that had proposed 304 homes and a mix of

commercial uses at the western edge of the town's historic district. Melissa Venable of Land Planning Solutions, which Luter had hired to assist with the project's planning and engineering, rescinded the withdrawal request on Oct. 4,

writing to town officials that Luter planned to "submit a revised plan" that would "reflect a reduction in density" and "eliminate the fourth floor of the multifamily

• See GRANGE, p. 4



A 44-megawatt solar farm is proposed off Moonlight and Burwells Bay roads.

44-megawatt solar farm proposed

By Stephen Faleski
Staff Writer

Isle of Wight County's Planning Commission has scheduled a Nov. 28 public hearing on a proposed 44-megawatt solar farm.

Moonlight Solar LLC, as the planned 523-acre facility has been named, would be located near the intersection of Moonlight and Burwells Bay roads near Isle of Wight's border with Surry County.

According to a public notice published in the Nov. 15 edition of The Smithfield Times, the application of Moonlight Solar and six landowning members of the Edwards family includes a request to withdraw approximately 523 acres from the Moonlight Agricultural/Forestal District.

Agricultural/forestal districts are voluntary creations of county governments that allow landowners special land use rates when their properties are assessed for real estate taxes in exchange for a pledge to keep their land in agriculture, forestry or open-space use for a set number of years, usually 10.

In May, county supervisors approved a zoning ordinance change capping the cumulative acreage of

• See SOLAR, p. 7



Christmas secrets

The Isle of Wight County Museum hosted "An Evening with St. Nick" the evening of Nov. 17 as part of Smithfield's "Light Up Main" festivities. Here, Harrison Byrd whispers to Santa what he wants for Christmas. (Photo courtesy of Jennifer England)

Eight seek Town Council seats

By Stephen Faleski
Staff Writer

Smithfield's call for applicants to fill ex-Councilman Wayne Hall's and Councilwoman Renee Rountree's available seats has netted eight names so far, including the man who ran against her in this year's Board of Supervisors election and a former county schools superintendent.

Rountree was elected on Nov. 7 to the Smithfield-centric District 1

• See COUNCIL, p. 8

IWCS projects 1,000-plus new pupils

By Stephen Faleski
Staff Writer

A study projects more than 1,000 new students will enter Isle of Wight County's school division upon the buildout of 13 housing developments, putting four of its nine schools over capacity.

Smithfield Middle School, which opened in 2005, is already at 95% of its 634-student capacity according to local enrollment data. Its 176-student share of the influx from more than 3,000

• See STUDENTS, p. 7

Hospital site work on track

By Stephen Faleski
Staff Writer

Progress on the 50-bed Riverside Smithfield Hospital slated to open in 2026 might not be visible from the street, but it's happening all the same.

"Site work is well underway," said hospital President Jessica Macalino in a Nov. 14 Zoom call with The Smithfield Times.

The Times will be meeting with Riverside officials quarterly to

provide updates on the hospital's construction.

Macalino said the work is currently focused on the hospital's foundation, which remains on track. The installation of stormwater infrastructure and curb-and-gutter concrete work will begin later this month and continue into early 2024.

"We're doing a lot of under-slab prep work," Macalino said.

• See HOSPITAL, p. 8

VDOT has set dates in 2024 for two four-day closures of the James River Bridge.



Dates set for JRB closures

Staff Report

The Virginia Department of Transportation has announced dates and times for two planned four-day shutdowns of the James River Bridge.

VDOT has awarded a contract to PCL Construction to replace 80 2-inch-thick wire cables original to the 41-year-old drawbridge that connects Isle of Wight County with Newport News.

The first of the two closures

— one for each drawbridge tower — will be from 1 a.m. on Friday, Jan. 12 through 5 a.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 16, during which time

• See JRB, p. 8



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