

# The Farmville Herald

Honor for the past, help for the present, hope for the future

Farmville, Virginia

Friday, March 24, 2023

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## Supervisors' plan won't work, mining experts say

BY BRIAN CARLTON  
The Farmville Herald

**BUCKINGHAM**

A metallic mining ban won't solve Buckingham County's concerns, mining experts say. In fact, they argue, it might damage or shut down existing mineral mining operations in the area, as state and federal regulators see no difference between the two.

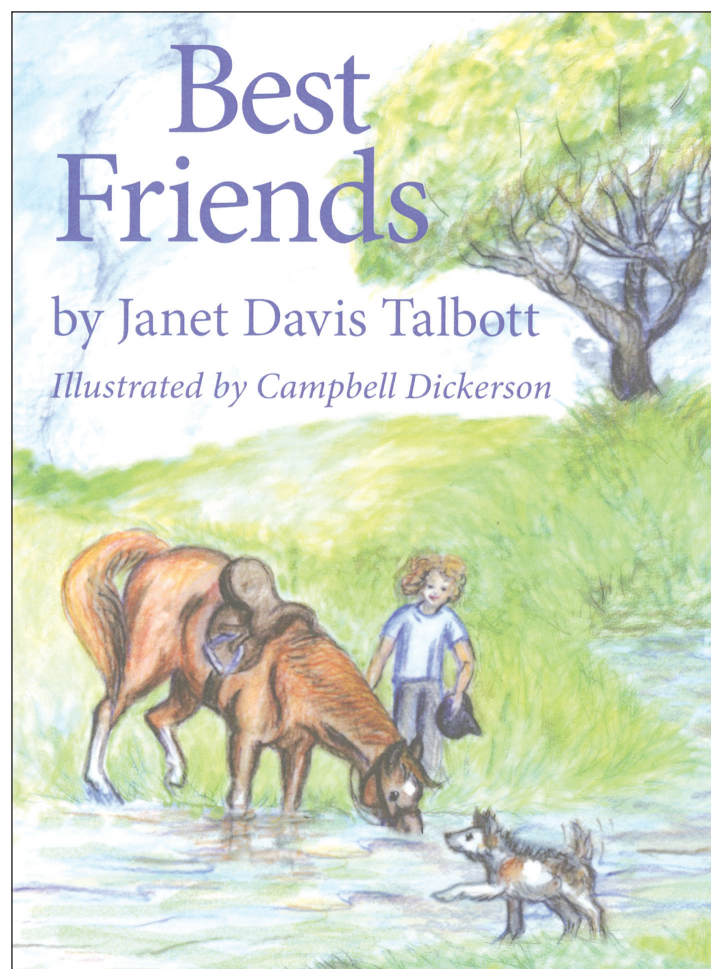
Earlier this year, the Buckingham County Board of Supervisors voted to explore a metallic mining ban. However, that's not something the board of supervisors can simply approve. Because this would change the county's zoning ordinance, it first has to go to the planning commission. And during a Monday, March 20 work session, planning commission members learned about the challenges such a ban would bring.

The issue is that, in the eyes of the state and

federal governments, there's no distinction between metal mining and mineral mining. Kyanite Mining Corporation, which mines and sells kyanite ore in Buckingham, pulls out iron as part of its mineral mining process. If metallic mining is banned, does that mean Kyanite's Buckingham operation would have to find a new way of processing what they find? Would they still be able to sell the iron?

"There's no difference in how the regulators deal with those operations," said Rob Lanham. He serves as program manager for the Virginia Transportation Construction Alliance. They handle more than 92% of all metals and minerals mined in Virginia. "If (Kyanite) is selling the iron out of (their) plant, does that now make

See **MINING**, Page A2



## Author shares experiences in first book

BY RACHEL AUSTIN  
The Farmville Herald



Janet Davis Talbott

**PRINCE EDWARD**

After over a decade of work, a local author has published her first book.

At age 75, Janet Davis Talbott of Prince Edward County fulfilled a lifelong dream of publishing her own book. It started out as something to do when she found herself with some extra downtime and now after 11 years of perfecting the story, her book is available for the world to read.

"Best Friends" is a story about how even after tragedy there can be good things in life. The story follows 10-year-old Sarah as she learns this lesson with the

help of her family and her best friends, Trudy the pony and Hopalong the dog. "Been a lifelong dream,"

See **BOOK**, Page A2

## VDOT announces intersection study findings

BY RACHEL AUSTIN  
The Farmville Herald

**CUMBERLAND**

Route 45 needs some work. So does the area of Route 616 and Route 684 that intersect with it. During their Tuesday, March 14 meeting, members of the Cumberland County Board of Supervisors heard concepts and considered ideas about how to fix the problem.

During the Virginia Department of Transportation update, the discussion focused on the Route 45/616/684 intersection. A safety study was done again after one previously in 2017.

Keith Rider, a traffic engineer from Lynchburg and his assistant Matt Connor presented the findings of this study. Fortunately, there has

been a reduction in crashes and a decrease in the severity of crashes since the 2017 study but the intersection is still a problem.

An engineering firm took a look at the intersection from an outside perspective for this study. The firm looked at peak-hour traffic, looking at what is already in place, crash data and operational analysis.

"This is a very unique intersection," said Rider. "The through movement is on 45, which is the primary route, but based on the peak traffic count data, Cartersville Road has more traffic. So, it makes it a very unique situation."

Rider and Hunter announced the recommended actions from this consultant

which boiled down to not creating a four-way stop yet but adding more markings and signage. They proposed to install a pavement message on Route 45 southbound and northbound approach with a curved arrow and a "slow" message to let drivers know they are coming to a turn. The markings were suggested for Route 45 as the study showed it had more traffic than the others.

Other changes include changing the first chevron sign in the series to a one-way sign, installing a skip line on the edge line, taking out the route shield and removing some of the embankments to improve the sightline.

Chairman Brian Stanley

See **STUDY**, Page A3

## County contributes to latest revitalization project

BY BRIAN CARLTON  
The Farmville Herald

**PAMPLIN**

Some residents of Pamplin remember when it was a booming railroad town. Thanks to traffic changes on Highway 460 and the decline of the tobacco industry, that once bustling town is now the smallest in the area. Residents hope to rebuild it, however, and part of that process involves the High Bridge Trail.

During their Tuesday,

March 14 meeting, the Prince Edward County Board of Supervisors heard a bit about High Bridge and the plan Pamplin residents have to bring in tourists. They want to direct the High Bridge Trail into the downtown area. The goal is to tailor the downtown, to attract tourists walking on the trail to stop in and look around.

Currently, High Bridge

Trail ends at Heights School Road. A land purchase by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation from Norfolk Southern will enable the trail to extend another mile into the Town of Pamplin. The town's responsibility is to build the western terminus parking lot. Originally, the cost of the parking lot was estimated at \$50,000. As Pamplin resides part in

See **CONTRIBUTES**, Page A3

## State holds history hearing at Moton

BY BRIAN CARLTON AND CONNOR THOMPSON  
The Farmville Herald

There's too much work involved and not enough time in the classroom. There are multiple mistakes, such as labeling an area's indigenous people as immigrants. And despite the length of the document, it doesn't mention things like the 2008 financial crisis, the creation of Medicare or the Great Society. Those are some of the complaints leveled against the proposed third draft of Virginia's Standards of Learning for History and Social Science. As the Virginia Board of Education debates if they should adopt the new standards, Farmville played host on Tuesday, March 21 to the final town hall meeting on the subject.

"There's a staggering increase in content," said Dr. Robin Smith. The former Hampden-Sydney College professor, whose three grandchildren attend local public schools, pointed out that nobody's given teachers more time to tackle the additional work. In total, there are 132 new standards

See **HEARING**, Page A4



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# MINING: Planning commission left with questions after session

FROM PAGE ONE

them a metal mine? Iron clearly is a metal. That's the caution we're advising you of. It's not a clear divisive split."

In fact, Lanham said, mineral mining is linked so close to metallic that there are just two definitions recognized by the state and federal officials.

"Metal and non-metal mining are synonymous," Lanham said. "The mine safety health administration (only) recognizes two mining components. There's coal and then there's metal/non-metal."

## POTENTIAL PENALTIES

That means if something goes into effect for any metallic mine, it would be up to the state to decide if mineral mines get impacted too.

"All the regulations are the same," said Paul Saunders. He works in the Virginia Department of Energy's mineral mining operation. "They fall under the same regulatory review program."

Commission members kept asking Kyanite President Guy Dixon and Spencer Young from Arvonnia Slate Mine if their operations would be considered metallic mining. They wanted a clear definition. Dixon pointed out that by the state and federal rules, it's not as simple as metallic or non-metallic.

"The state doesn't view a difference between metal and non-metal," Dixon said. He explained that the only difference is between coal and everything else. So he encouraged planning commission members to think hard, because anything done with metallic mining will likely impact his company, and all other mining operations in Buckingham.

"You're the ones getting ready to make the rule, so you better be pretty clear," Dixon told the commission.

As of 2021, the last available data, there are 211 workers employed by the mining industry in Buckingham County. That doesn't count support jobs

connected to the companies. Kyanite on its own has an annual payroll of \$10 million, with another \$1 million that goes into employee retirement plans. The company also has purchased several hundred acres of land in the county, planning for future expansion.

"We bought those pieces of property with the understanding that nobody was going to rip the rug out from under our feet and we need those pieces of property to be here 75 years from now," Dixon said. "We can't have the rules radically ripped up and changed in the middle of the game. If you change those rules, it will for sure affect the longevity of what we're able to do."

If the county does push through a ban that damages Kyanite's operation, Dixon said the group would have to consider a change. He pointed out that Kyanite has bought the right to mine in several other places besides Buckingham.

## CONCERN OVER CHEMICAL BAN

Buckingham also couldn't just ban certain chemicals used in the process, like cyanide, the mining officials said. That was an alternative proposed earlier this year by planning commission member Danny Allen. Again, they argue, it's needed in the process. Also, they're afraid it could trigger a domino effect.

"Some chemical use is required for certain types of mining," Lanham said. "Additionally, a general

ban of chemical use in mining can set a precedent."

If you ban certain chemicals in mining, Lanham argued, there's a concern it would be banned in all industries linked to mining.

Mining also isn't something that's just going to go away. Dr. Erik Westman, from Virginia Tech University's Mining and Minerals Engineering Department, pointed out that all of us, even those opposed to mining, use products developed by it every day.

"There are more minerals in an iPhone than in a human body," Westman said. "There's some gold in there. We use gold because it's the metal that oxidizes the least. We use silicate, cobalt."

He pointed out that mined lithium is used to make electric car batteries. Limestone helps make everything from roofing shingles to duct tape. And all of that has to come from somewhere. And there are responsible mining companies, he added.

"Just like there are good drivers and bad drivers, there are good mining operators and bad," Westman said.

## TIME TO HEAR FROM THE OPPOSITION

After Monday's meeting, planning commission members said they still needed more information before making a decision. To do that, they'll hold another work session, this time with some experts opposed to mining. This next meeting will be held Wednesday, April 19, at 6 p.m.

# BOOK: Prince Edward resident publishes her first work at 75

FROM PAGE ONE

said Talbott. "I want other people to see our experiences growing up. I only went to one year of college, but I learned more by being on the farm. I learn what is good and bad and about respect and that sort of thing."

The book pulls many experiences from Talbott's childhood as she remembers playing outside with her brother and cousins on their farm and the adjacent land that was also owned by family. Next to her family, Talbott

has a strong love for animals and the outdoors. She hopes her book can share these experiences with the younger generations who don't spend as much time outside exploring.

One memory she shares in her book is drinking straight from the creek on the farm. The water from the creek was pure so it was safe to drink, but according to Talbott, she did have to watch to make sure she didn't get a tadpole or a crawfish.

"Kids today don't know about the good life," said Talbott. "We

had a fun life growing up. Even if I was able to I couldn't have bought a better life."

As the book also talks about family, Talbott's family has been very supportive of this book. Her brother, who has also published some writings helped her map out the story as she was putting it together to make sure it had the best flow. Her grandchildren have helped by creating a TikTok on a horse farm to help promote the book.

The book is aimed for children ages 8 to 14 years old, even though

anyone can enjoy the story. Talbott said she received a call from a man who enjoyed the book and read it twice because he found it interesting.

This may be her first book, but it will not be her last. According to Talbott, she currently has six other stories in the works that she is finishing up. These will have similar themes focusing on her two loves, family and animals.

"Best Friends" is available on Amazon, Barnes and Noble or Dorrance Publishing Company.

**You Are Invited To Join Us**

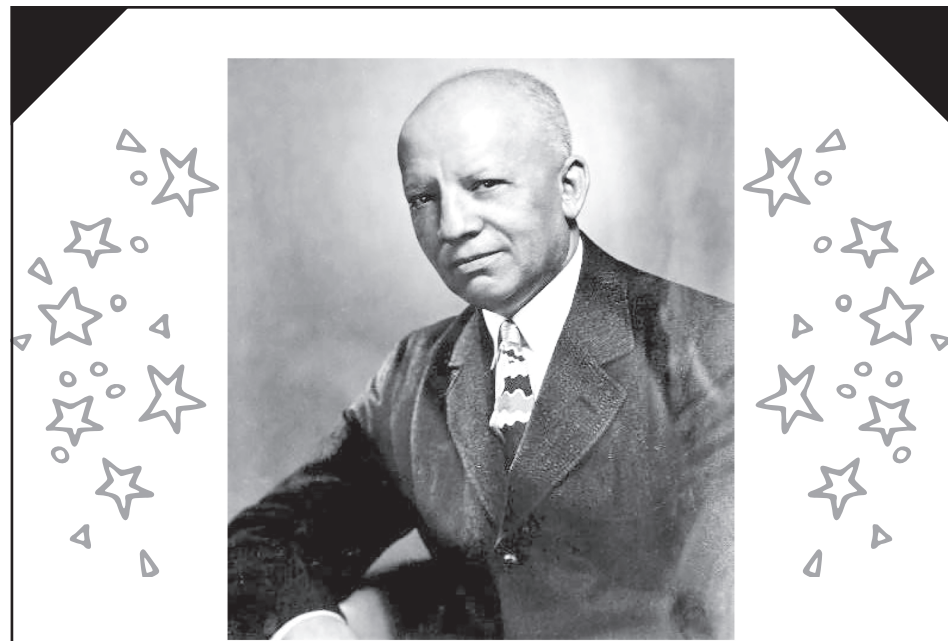
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## VFW member hosts book exhibit

Farmville VFW member Dr. Michael Lund recently hosted an exhibit of books published by the Home and Abroad project at the Longwood University Greenwood Library. A Vietnam veteran, Lund encourages other veterans to write their stories. He provides assistance with the writing process, editing and eventual publication of their work.

A series of such presentations will be offered in area libraries and announced on the VFW Post 7059 Facebook Page. Farmville post members Greg Winston, Dean Lord and Fred Hill have authored books for the program and a book of remembrances for deceased VFW comrade Tom Hicks. The program is open to all area veterans. Those needing help

telling their story can visit Dr. Lund's webpage at <https://homeandabroadva.com>.

Pictured here, from left, are Dr. Lund, Commander Lord, author of 'I Always Wanted to Be an Artist', Deanna Schwartz, author of 'I Couldn't Save My Boy' and Fred Hill, author of 'The Man Behind the Mask: Grenada and other Ports of Call'.

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# The Farmville Herald

Honor for the past, help for the present, hope for the future

Farmville, Virginia

Friday, March 31, 2023

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## Car strikes stoplight on Wednesday morning

One person was injured during an accident Wednesday morning in Farmville. Farmville Police Department received a call at 6:37 a.m., being sent out to the corner of Oak and Third Street. A vehicle hit the stoplight, causing minor damage to both the vehicle and the property. According to the department, the driver was assessed on the scene for minor injuries but was not transported to the emergency room. Public Works was also called to the scene to inspect the traffic light that was struck during the accident. The traffic light is working properly again at this time.

## Town police help clear up 'misunderstanding'

BY BRIAN CARLTON  
The Farmville Herald

FARMVILLE

Farmville police say while last week's incident near Centra Health involved a 'cultural misunderstanding', that played no part in what charges were brought.

On Thursday, March 23, Farmville officers arrested and charged 59-year-old Fahd Saab with assault and battery. Saab had lifted up a 12-year-old boy, picking him off the ground. The boy got free soon after.

"In this instance, a person originally from another country, where their customs and traditions are different than ours, picked up a child in the presence of the child's parent and other family members in an effort to show affection and respect," said Farmville Police Public Information Officer Sam Bowles in a statement. "While perhaps commonplace in other cultures for a stranger to pick up or hug someone else's children, it is frightening and unacceptable to us, and potentially illegal."

After being punched, Saab then fled the scene, at which point warnings went out to the surrounding counties and jurisdictions, asking for help in tracking down a man in a khaki coat, driving a medical transport van. Farmville Police officials say when they were able to identify and get in touch with the suspect, he returned

as requested. It was Saab's actions that caused the charges to be filed, Bowles said in the statement. He was not charged with attempted abduction because the department's investigation showed this wasn't an attempt to kidnap, just a misunderstanding.

"To be clear, while the misunderstanding was the primary cause of the incident, it was not a factor in determining the appropriate level of criminal charges," Bowles said in the statement. "Criminal charges will always be dependent upon whether the statutory elements of a particular crime have occurred. For this incident, those elements fit the crime of assault and battery."

### SOME INFORMATION IS DELAYED

Bowles also explained that in cases like this, the department can't always provide all of the available information at the time. The reason is that if there's an open investigation, what news is and isn't released could affect the results.

"Keeping our citizens safe is our primary goal as an agency," Bowles said in the statement. "As we attempt to balance victim privacy with the public's need to know, as well as

See MISUNDERSTANDING, Page A10

## Marsden runs for state seat

John C. Marsden will be running for the District 50 seat in the House of Delegates. The former Prince Edward County GOP Chairman made the announcement Wednesday, March 29, saying it's time for a fresh start.

"With this new district, it is time for fresh representation," Marsden said. "I am running to represent the 50th district because we deserve more than career politicians who spend decades in office while our area continues to lose out; by losing jobs, population, and having our citizens and businesses struggle



John C. Marsden

See MARSDEN, Page A2

## State steps in to help elections office

BY BRIAN CARLTON  
The Farmville Herald

BUCKINGHAM

The Buckingham County Elections Office is open for business. That part isn't unusual. Residents can come in, register to vote, pick up forms to run for office and handle any other election related business from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. What's not normal is that the Buckingham County Registrar isn't running the office. Currently, officials from the Virginia Department of Elections are handling that.

"The Department of Elections (DOE) did receive requests of assistance from several sources," said Andrea Gaines. She works as external affairs manager for the Virginia DOE. As for how long state help will be needed, that question is still up in the air.

"We do not have a specific time identified for when our staff will leave Buckingham," Gaines said.

The reason for that is because as

of Monday, March 20, Buckingham Registrar Lindsey Taylor resigned her position. We don't have specifics as to why she resigned, because neither state, local or Buckingham County Circuit Court officials can provide a copy of her letter, only acknowledging that she did in fact step down from her role.

Local officials have known for weeks the decision was a possibility, as the Buckingham Electoral Board declined to renew Taylor's contract, which expires June 30. The board made that announcement during their Friday, March 10 meeting.

"She has three options for her contract," Electoral Board member Dr. Karen Cerwinski said during the March 10 meeting, speaking of Taylor. "She's a smart person and she will pick the right option."

The first was to serve the

See HELP, Page A5

## High winds expected Saturday

BY RACHEL AUSTIN  
The Farmville Herald

Residents can expect a windy weekend throughout this region. As a result, power companies are taking precautions.

According to the Blacksburg site of the National Weather Service, a front is coming in late Friday, March 31, and is expected to stick around through Saturday, April 1. On Friday, folks can expect a breezy day with 10 to 15 miles per hour winds. But as

the front comes through late Friday, winds will start picking up to 15 to 20 miles per hour with gusts getting up to 30 to 35 miles per hour.

On Saturday, residents can expect high winds throughout the day. The National Weather Service says to expect southwest winds of around 25 to 30 miles per hour with potential gusts of 40 to 50 by the afternoon. Fortunately, by Sunday morning, winds are expected to be back to

See WINDS, Page A2

## 'There are no deposits big enough', experts say

BY BRIAN CARLTON  
The Farmville Herald

BUCKINGHAM

Yes, there are gold deposits in Buckingham County. And yes, it would be possible to mine those areas. But the problem, according to Paul Busch, involves cost.

"There are no deposits in the state of Virginia big enough to be (profitable)," said Busch. He owns Big Dawg Resources, running a gold mine in Goochland County. The Buckingham County resident works to remine the metals left behind in abandoned mines and clean up the sites. That includes removing mercury contamination on the sites, reclaiming the shafts and removing underground timbers that have been leaching cre-

osote into the groundwater.

Busch said there's just not enough gold, in Buckingham County or anywhere else in the state, to make the effort worthwhile.

"The state of Virginia has been exploratory drilled up, down, left, right and sideways," Busch said. "If (a big gold deposit) was here, they would have found it."

Busch had been called as an expert to the Buckingham County Planning Commission. Speaking in a hearing on Monday, March 27, he said it's not about the quality, it's about the quantity.

See DEPOSITS, Page A2



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# DEPOSITS: Mine owner says Buckingham doesn't have enough gold to be profitable

FROM PAGE ONE

"Really good deposits like what Aston Bay has found, has been found before," Busch said. "The quantity is just not there. Virginia has veins. We don't have big ore bodies underground. Yes, the gold in that vein is phenomenal, but it's 400 feet deep."

Busch gave an example. Take an Olympic-sized swimming pool, he said, drain it and put a \$100 bill at the bottom. Then fill the whole thing with dirt. Now follow regulations and only search for that \$100 by coming in at a 45 degree angle from all four sides.

"Would you dig to that \$100?" Busch asked. "I hope not, because you would lose money."

## DOES GOLD EXIST IN BUCKINGHAM?

Yes, a gold deposit does exist in Buckingham County. In April 2019, the Canadian prospecting company Aston Bay Holdings announced they were beginning to search for gold in the area.

To be clear, Aston Bay isn't a mining company. It's a prospecting company. That means they search for gold, silver or other minerals, identify and purchase a location, then sell that information (and property) to the highest bidder.

They can do this because under Virginia law, prospecting doesn't require a state permit if you're searching for anything other than uranium.

In statements given in March 2019 and July 2020, company officials declared their drilling confirmed

"a high-grade, at-surface gold vein system at Buckingham, as well as an adjacent wider zone of lower-grade disseminated gold mineralization." In other words, they found enough to keep going. At the beginning of 2020, the company secured the right to prospect on 4,953 acres of land in Buckingham County.

As for a timeline on when work might be finished, first it has to be restarted. The company hasn't done any work in Buckingham since early 2020.

"We have conducted only preliminary exploratory drilling on the local landowners' properties at Buckingham, and none for the past two years," Aston Bay CEO Thomas Ullrich told The Herald earlier this year. "We have several quality potential projects, but a limited amount of funds. Over the last year and a half, we have been investing in the landowners in another county. We look forward to investing in Buckingham again."

## WHAT WOULD IT TAKE?

One of the big questions the commission had involved the future. Ok, gold isn't profitable enough now to mine in Virginia, but what about later on? Busch said it would likely need to be about \$5,000 per ounce. As of Wednesday, March 29, gold was selling at \$1,970 per ounce.

"You'd (need) to be pretty close to (\$5,000)," Busch said. "It would definitely have to more than double where (the price) is now."

Bush also was asked about and discussed an alternative to the county's current proposal. In February, Buckingham supervisors put together a proposal to eliminate metallic mining as an allowed land use across the county. But that's not something supervisors can just approve. First, it had to go before the planning commission. And over the last month, planning commission members have gone through a series of hearings, collecting information about the subject. Mineral mining operations in Buckingham warned that due to a lack of state guidelines, if Buckingham closed all metallic mining, other companies could also be at risk. Planning commission member Danny Allen had proposed another option, to ban the chemicals, instead of trying to shut down the process itself. Busch said while he wasn't necessarily in favor of any ban, a process block made the most sense.

"Ban the cyanidation process," Busch said. "Nobody's going to use it anyway. We don't have the deposits for it."

By that he's referring to the size of the gold deposits. Cyanide is only used on small deposits and the ones found in Buckingham are fairly large. By banning the process by which cyanide is used, you don't ban the chemical itself, which is used in everything from pesticides to herbicides and cigarette smoke.

"Just ban the process," Busch said. "That's probably the easiest solution to the whole thing."

## WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

There will at least be one more planning commission hearing on gold mining, this time with some experts opposed to mining. This next meeting will be held Wednesday, April 19, at 6 p.m.

# MARSDEN: Former GOP chair will compete for the newly created District 50 Delegate seat

FROM PAGE ONE

without basic modern infrastructure."

The 43-year-old attorney and small business owner will challenge in a newly created district consisting of

the majority of Prince Edward County, Charlotte, Lunenburg and Mecklenburg counties, along with a portion of Halifax County.

Marsden pointed out that with the Feb. 24 announcement by 60th District

Delegate James Edmunds that he will not seek re-election, no one who has ever represented the majority of 50th District voters will be on the ballot in 2023.

Marsden said he would be first and foremost a strong advocate for Southside Virginia, as the region experiences decreased representation in the legislature after the 2021 redistricting.

"With population loss and the accompanying loss of a seat in the House of Delegates, Southside needs a stronger advocate," Marsden said. "Our voices are fewer in number, they must be stronger. As a lawyer, I advocate for people's interests for a living. Every day I am their voice, often in the most difficult times of their lives, and I want to put that advocacy skill to work, for our area and its families, in Richmond."

Marsden also pledges to be a leader on issues that matter to voters of Southside Virginia.

"On the conservative values that matter to us, it is imperative we nominate someone who isn't content to follow other legislators, but who will personally take the lead in the fight to create jobs, support family values, protect the

unborn, and defend our Constitution, including the Second Amendment and civil liberties," Marsden said. "We need a leader not a follower."

## LOOKING AHEAD

"I look forward to the campaign and want to thank the many citizens of the district who urged me to run for the House of Delegates and have supported my campaign thus far," Marsden added.

On March 20, the first day to qualify for the June primaries, Marsden turned in more than the required number of signatures to appear on the Republican primary ballot June 20.

"I am truly humbled and honored by the support that I have received," Marsden said. "It has allowed me to qualify for the ballot after only a few days."

Support has also extended to an outpouring of financial support for his candidacy, Marsden added.

"I am very pleased to announce that I can begin my campaign having, after less than a week, raised more than twice the amount other candidates raised all last year," he said. "The generous support of dedicated individuals shows that Southside Virginia has a desire to have a change for the better, and be represented by strong, vocal leadership in Richmond going forward."



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## 2023-2024 Kindergarten Registration

WHO: Children who are age 5 on or before September 30, 2023  
Current PK-4 do not attend this registration event.

WHEN: Thursday, April 20, 2023 9 AM - 6 PM

WHERE: Cumberland County Elementary School

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS:

- \* Birth Certificate
- \* Current Kindergarten Physical dated on or after 8/9/22
- \* Immunization Records
- \* Two Proofs of Cumberland Residency
- \* Screening - All new K students will be screened on April 20th, or by appointment.

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or more trained peer facilitators. These online, hour-long sessions help to re-establish trust, integrate your experience and build back your resilience despite a difficult and painful occurrence.

Experiencing a scam can be devastating, but it doesn't have to define you. You can visit [www.aarp.org/fraudsupport](http://www.aarp.org/fraudsupport) to learn more about the free program and register today.

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**SPORTS:** Longwood team finishes European trip **B1**

# The Farmville Herald

*Honor for the past, help for the present, hope for the future*

Farmville, Virginia

Friday, August 18, 2023

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## Job numbers keep rising

BY BRIAN CARLTON  
*The Farmville Herald*

The numbers keep going up and that's a good thing in this case. From Buckingham to Cumberland to Prince Edward, all of the counties in this region are seeing two things: an

increasing labor force and a growing employment number.

This isn't a one-time thing. The latest numbers, which show where we were at the end of June, continue a trend that's been moving forward for several months now in Virginia. All three counties show

month to month and year over year growth. That's due to a post-pandemic "return to normal" of sorts for the region, said Meagan Schoenberger. She works as senior economist for financial firm KPMG.

Here and other places across the state, it's being

done in different ways. People move into an area and decide they want to launch businesses. That produces a demand for more workers and in some cases encourages people to move in.

"That's sort of robustified economies in (some) geo-

graphic regions and now they need a lot more labor," Schoenberger said.

**A LOOK AT PRINCE EDWARD**

Out of our area, Prince Edward County's seen the

See **JOBS**, Page **A4**



## What's the next step in mining debate?

BY BRIAN CARLTON  
*The Farmville Herald*

What will the state do? Concerns over that question have left Buckingham County's discussion of metallic mining in limbo this summer. And while the county's planning commission does expect to make a recommendation about mining, they want an answer about state plans before that happens.

This centers around the Virginia Gold Mining Workgroup's report. Last year, the state created a group,

**BUCKINGHAM**

including Buckingham Supervisor Jordan Miles, Kenda Hanuman from Friends of Buckingham and several others from the area, to review Virginia's gold mining rules and regulations. That report, which was submitted to the General Assembly back in December, said Virginia's regulations weren't up to date. The group found the state's rules are designed for processes used back in the 1940s and

See **MINING**, Page **A2**

## Call times are going up

BY RACHEL AUSTIN  
*The Farmville Herald*

Cumberland Fire and EMS Chief Andy Aigner says that calls are about the same from month to month. The only difference in the data is that call times and turn-around times are going up. During their August meeting, he told the Cumberland supervisors this may be due to longer waits at the hospital. The state has acknowledged this as an issue across the Commonwealth and has put out guidance.

During the very hot days this sum-

**CUMBERLAND**

mer, the fire department was able to partner with the Cumberland County Public Library as a cooling center. People could come to get out of the heat and read a book or other activities the library offers. That's a service the library provides as part of the national public library system.

"We greatly appreciate the partnership they allowed us to have," said Aigner. "It was a tremendous benefit

See **TIMES**, Page **A2**



## Town gets funding help for airport

BY BRIAN CARLTON  
*The Farmville Herald*

**FARMVILLE**

State and federal funds will help renovate the Farmville Regional Airport. A \$69,000 grant from the Virginia Department of Aviation, combined with \$774,000 from the federal government, will allow the town to reconstruct the airport's taxiway.

The federal dollars came as part of the 2023 Airport Improvement Program. And that money is locked

in for use on the airport, specifically earmarked for the taxiway work. With money in hand, having accepted the funds, town officials say the actual repair work will begin soon.

"The next step is to finalize with the contractor," said Farmville Town Manager Dr. Scott Davis. "Work should begin in early fall."

See **FUNDING**, Page **A3**



WIC Associates Katrina Couch, Devin Maxey, Shamir Jackson, Quynasha Hatcher, Tiffany Spillman and WIC Coordinator Karen Townsend.

## WIC program returns to region

BY RACHEL AUSTIN  
*The Farmville Herald*

After a three-year pause, the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program returns to this region, with some changes.

WIC is a federal supplemental nutrition program with the goal to im-

prove the health of pregnant women, infants and children under the age of five. Along with providing food, the program staff provides nutrition education, breastfeeding promotion and support, screenings and referrals to many other resources and

See **WIC**, Page **A3**



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# TIMES: Road work continues in Cumberland

FROM PAGE ONE

to the community. It was something we may not have been able to pull together so quickly without them.”

The stations are continuing their training. They just completed the driver's training to get the certification to pursue an actual license to drive the emergency vehicles. Aigner and the volunteer chiefs are looking to start county-wide training, especially in the driver series which has three components that are 16 hours each. This also serves as a great opportunity for the different stations to practice working together outside of an emergency and build better relationships.

The fire department is also officially a health and safety institute organization and can teach CPR. It is a priority for the department to get all volunteers certified before doing community classes.

## CUMBERLAND SCHOOLS START THE NEW YEAR

Also during the August meeting, Cumberland County Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Chip Jones gave an update as students are back in the classroom to start the new school year. Even though the year has started, the district is still looking for teachers to fill empty positions.

The schools held a joint celebration with an open house and National Night Out. Even though the weather didn't cooperate, the collaboration made for a good night. Jones extended a thank you to all the community organizations that donated school supplies.

All staff took part in civilian casualty care training with the Department of Criminal Justice (DCJ). Everyone except transportation attended the training to be prepared in case the unthinkable takes place.

“When I called DCJ about that, they said we were the only school division in the commonwealth of Virginia that required that training for their staff,” said Jones.

For the track project, the track is coming along nicely with the next step being the striping. The new middle school playground is now complete just in time for the start of the year.

## LIBRARY HIRES ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN

Glenn Mazingo, chair of the board of trustees, announced that Amy White has joined as the assistant librarian at Cumberland County Public Library. She was formerly a librarian with Buckingham County and currently works at Cumberland Middle School bringing great experience.

The library is currently preparing for Patriot Day. They will have a pop-up tent set up with book giveaways and a treasure chest of prizes. This will also be a great opportunity for residents to sign up for the Dolly Parton Imagination Library or apply for a library card. For the library card, there is now only one form of identification required making it easier than before.

On the business side, the library state aid application was approved at the beginning of the month and they are currently with the county firm to help close their books for 2022.

“We also have decided to stop collecting book fines,” said Mazingo. “We usually write them off so there's really no reason to collect them. But we are continuing to charge people if they lose or damage a book.”

The Central Virginia Regional Library is helping order books for the library. The first order took place on Aug. 1 and should come in soon. They are also doing the integration process for the new library system which will be completed in the next three to four months.

## VDOT UPDATE

Finally, County Administrator Derek Stamey gave a quick update on the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT). The curve on Clinton Road is currently being looked at by traffic engineers after concerns were brought up in the previous meeting.

The Cartersville intersection resurfacing is scheduled for this week. Contractors will mill and repave the road and install temporary tape pavement markings and then VDOT will install new signage. After monitoring the intersection they will replace the markings with permanent ones.

“There is a light at the end of the tunnel for this project,” said Stamey.

# MINING: Planning commission will deliver recommendation soon

FROM PAGE ONE

50s, rather than today. A question for the Buckingham County Planning Commission is what, if anything, does the Assembly plan to do with that report? Eight months later, it's not even been referenced in the Assembly session. No bills were filed involving mining for the 2023 session, with none currently pre-filed for next year's session either.

Earlier this year, Buckingham supervisors assigned the commission to review metallic mining, the county's definition of it and recommend a path forward, in terms of any changes needed for local rules and regulations. To help with that, the commission wants to hear from state agencies.

“We're trying to see if we can get any one of the agencies to make a decision or give us direction,” Planning Commission Chairman John Bickford said at the group's July 24 meeting. “If we got that, it might make our job easier.”

## WHAT DOES THE STATE REPORT SAY?

So just as a refresher, the state gold mining report basically argues that current mining laws work for the types of mines now operating in the state. But commercial gold mining is something different, it adds. Commercial gold mining uses different techniques to get to the metal and needs a modern system, the report argues, to monitor impact. Part of the concern involves the water system. The James River, for example, is just two miles away from part of the land currently being prospected for gold in Buckingham County. That river delivers water to nearly 2.7 million Virginians. All it would take is one accident during actual mining. If the protection systems fail, that releases poisonous chemicals into the river, damaging the drinking water for millions of Virginians. Things are different

from 1804, when the first commercial gold mining operation started in Virginia. That was Whitehall Mine, near Shady Grove Church in Spotsylvania County. Now, as the report points out, advanced exploration methods may cause greater impacts. That includes impact on soil, air and public health in general.

Take, for example, any exploration and prospecting work. Prospecting and exploration is currently exempt from even some of the current regulations in place. The report points out that “there are currently no mineral mining regulations for exploration in Virginia that mandate the plugging of drill holes or the covering of drill cuttings from the hole.”

Basically, if a group is exploring or prospecting, those drill holes can remain open, potentially causing damage to the groundwater. A company also doesn't have to notify when it's drilling during the exploration phase. Residents, especially those close by, just find out often due to the noise.

## WHERE IS MINING CURRENTLY ALLOWED?

Currently in Buckingham County, mining is allowed in two districts. In Buckingham's zoning, manufacturing districts are labeled as M-1 or M-2. In the M-1 districts, commercial core drilling is allowed by right. That means a company can drill without requesting a special use permit. Mining of any type is also allowed in the M-1 district by permit, which means the company comes before the Buckingham planning commission and supervisors and makes the request. In the M-2 district, mining is just allowed, with no permit needed.

Buckingham has two areas right now where that's in effect. One is on Route 15 and the surrounding area near Dillwyn, where the Kyanite Mining Corporation is working. The second is also on Route 15, just off Bridgeport Road in the Slate Quarry area.

There is no metallic mining happening in either area.

## MOVING FORWARD

So with all that said, but no action from the state, where does that leave Buckingham's mining discussion? Right now, it looks like things are being put on pause until early next year.

This summer, Buckingham County Attorney E.M. Wright told the commission he saw four options for them. They could recommend a mining ban. They could just ban metallic mining. They could adjust current ordinance or do nothing at all. The group decided to basically take option four at the time, with any changes coming during the update to the county's comprehensive plan, which determines what is allowed in each zoning district. Bickford said nothing's changed during the commission's July meeting.

“We had decided to table this while we work on the comprehensive plan until January,” Bickford said. “At that point, we'll be far enough into the comprehensive plan that we'll (be able to) do it on our own.”

While parts of the discussion might be tabled until January, that doesn't mean

the commission can't communicate with supervisors this fall. Buckingham Planner Cheryl Edmondson told supervisors during their Monday, Aug. 14 meeting that she hopes to have something from the commission to give next month.

“This is something they have not finalized,” Edmondson said. “We will discuss it briefly at the work session next week and hope to have a formal recommendation after the meeting on the 28th.”

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