

Fluvanna

REVIEW

Supervisors May Consider Meals Tax

PAGE 8

School Board Discusses Funding Support Positions

Includes Instructional Assistants, Reading and Math Specialists

PAGE 10

Mystery Boom May Have Been Explosive Target

PAGE 7

LMOA Lake Views | PAGE 11

Fluvanna Director of Emergency Services Arrested

PAGE 4

Coal Train Derails near Brems

PAGE 4

Cifers Wins 10th District State Senate Seat

PAGE 4

Fluvanna Economic Development Features New Businesses

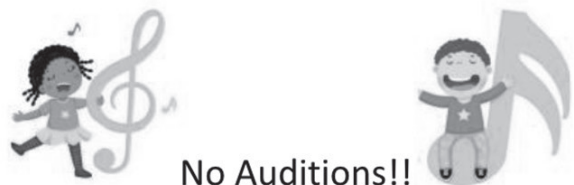
PAGE 5

FUMA to Participate in the 2025 Presidential Inauguration Parade

PAGE 6



It's time to SING!!!
FLUVANNA COMMUNITY SINGERS
 are starting rehearsals for our **Spring Concert**



No Auditions!!

Rehearsals will begin **Jan. 23, 2025**, at Fluvanna County High School
 (Parking on lower level on left of school by the buses, rehearsals in Music Room)

Sign up starts at 6:30pm followed by rehearsal at 7pm for the 1st 3 weeks

Dues are \$20/season

Rehearsals every Thursday @ 7pm

Concert will be held at Central Elementary School – Date: May 2 & 3, 2025

Last day to sign up: Feb. 6, 2025



For more information call Adele: 434-962-1928

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Virginia Press
 Association



OUR DATA SPEAKS VOLUMES

On the cover: Photo by Jon Tyson. Cover design by Amelia McConnell.

DEADLINE Advertising due by Wednesday at 5 p.m. for the issue released eight days later. Submissions, letters and calendar items due by Friday at 9 a.m. for the subsequent paper.
DISPLAY AND WEB ADS For information including rates and deadlines, call Rae Alberts at 434-207-0223.

GENERAL

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Contact - Edee@fluvannareview.com, or stop by the office at 106 Crofton Plaza, Suite 1, Palmyra, VA. We can not take ads over the phone. Questions? Call (434) 207-0221. Fee for the new year 2023 is \$10 for 40 word limit and .25 cents per word over limit. Payment may be mailed : P.O.Box 59, Palmyra, Va 22963 or Visa, Mastercard, Discover accepted. Deadline for print ads is **MONDAY BY NOON.**

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Letters to the editor should be a maximum of 350 words and include the name, phone number and address of the author. The phone number and street address are for the paper's records only. We reserve the right to edit letters to the editor. Submit to editor@fluvannareview.com

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Community calendar items must be about community events, under 50 words, and will run only once a month.



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The Weekly Crossword

by Margie E. Burke

ACROSS

- 1 Coop residents
- 5 Hawthorne's
"___-Told Tales"
- 10 Harsh review
- 14 Beat anagram
- 15 It's a shore thing
- 16 Cornmeal cake
- 17 Like most
citizens
- 19 Miner's quest
- 20 Tasty mollusk
- 21 Broadway
backdrop
- 23 Shampoo brand
- 24 Royal title
- 25 Credit cards,
slangily
- 28 Grant basis
- 29 Race unit
- 30 Fling with force
- 32 Downy duck
- 36 Territory
- 38 Quick rides
- 40 Cut up
- 41 Bakery treats
- 43 Falk or Fonda
- 45 Junior, to Senior
- 46 Vegan's staple
- 48 Campus figure
- 50 Cancel a choice
- 54 Very, in Avignon
- 55 Cardinal
address
- 56 Hung in there
- 59 "Shane" star
- 60 Reject as false
- 62 Scrabble piece
- 63 Bruce Lee film,
"___ the
Dragon"
- 64 Astin or Bean
- 65 Nautical
direction
- 66 Thorny bunch
- 67 Animated crime-
fighting quartet,
briefly

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13	
14					15						16				
17				18							19				
20						21			22						
		23				24									
25	26					27		28							
29				30				31			32		33	34	35
36			37		38				39		40				
41				42		43				44		45			
			46		47			48			49				
50	51	52						53		54					
55										56				57	58
59					60			61							
62					63						64				
65					66						67				

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- 3 It's breaking, at
times
- 4 Union members?
- 5 Dust Bowl's
decade
- 6 Get hitched
- 7 Football's
fighting ___
- 8 Geological
seven
- 9 Mesh, as gears
- 10 "Delightful!"
- 11 Off the leash
- 12 Llama's land
- 13 Track events
- 18 Bed on board
- 22 Calcutta butter
- 25 Surveyor's map
- 26 Actress ___
Flynn Boyle
- 27 Frothy coffee
drink
- 31 Contend (for)
- 33 Hold in low
regard
- 34 Univ. course
- 35 Monopoly
payment
- 37 One who
shows up
- 39 Oregon Trail
folks
- 42 One and only
- 44 Like Mayberry
- 47 Stratocaster
maker
- 49 Partner of cease
- 50 Tucker's tune,
"___ Dawn"
- 51 Send, in a way
- 52 Move stealthily
- 53 Doctor's orders
- 57 John, in Wales
- 58 Job for a body
shop
- 61 Worker in a
garden

Answers to Previous Crossword:

A	G	H	A	S	T		L	A	S	T		D	B	A	
C	R	E	C	H	E		I	M	P	A	I	R	E	D	
M	A	N	T	E	L		B	E	A	N	C	U	R	D	
E	N	R	O	L	L	M	E	N	T		E	G	G	S	
		Y	U	L		O	R	D	E	A	L				
R	I	F	T		P	U	T	S		Z	A	I	R	E	
U	N	O		F	U	R	Y		G	U	N	N	E	D	
L	A	N	T	E	R	N		W	O	R	D	I	N	G	
E	N	D	E	A	R		T	H	E	E		T	E	E	
R	E	A	D	S		H	A	I	R		L	I	E	S	
						I	T	S	E	L	F		M	I	A
W	A	C	O		H	A	L	F		V	O	L	L	E	Y
I	L	L	U	S	I	V	E		E	N	T	I	R	E	
M	E	A	S	U	R	E	S		T	A	E	N	I	A	
P	E	P		P	E	N	T		S	E	D	G	E	S	

DOWN

- 1 Ring of light
- 2 Big name in
online bidding

SUDOKU

Edited by Margie E. Burke

Difficulty: Easy

							4	
					9			3
1	9	7		8				
				6			8	
8		1						9
4	3			5				
3	5	2		6				
						4		6
9					2	5		

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HOW TO SOLVE:

Each row must contain the numbers 1 to 9; each column must contain the numbers 1 to 9; and each set of 3 by 3 boxes must contain the numbers 1 to 9.

Answer to Previous Sudoku:

5	6	3	2	9	8	4	7	1
9	4	7	1	6	3	8	2	5
8	2	1	5	7	4	6	9	3
3	1	2	8	5	6	9	4	7
7	8	5	4	1	9	2	3	6
6	9	4	3	2	7	5	1	8
2	7	8	9	3	5	1	6	4
1	5	6	7	4	2	3	8	9
4	3	9	6	8	1	7	5	2

Fluvanna director of emergency services arrested on sexual battery, assault and battery charges

BY HEATHER MICHON
CORRESPONDENT

Fluvanna County Director of Emergency Services James True was arrested on Friday (Jan. 10) on seven counts of sexual battery and two counts of assault and battery. All the charges are misdemeanors.

County Attorney Daniel Whitten announced the arrest on Saturday, saying that True had turned himself in at the Fluvanna County Sheriff's Office and was being held without bond at the Central Virginia Regional Jail. He is scheduled

for arraignment on Tuesday (Jan. 14).

Whitten said the criminal charges "developed after two county employees filed initial crime reports." The alleged crimes are said to have occurred between October 2023 and July 2024.

True was named as director of emergency services in April 2023.

Upon learning of the first filed charge, True was immediately placed on administrative leave by County Administrator Eric Dahl.

Coal train derails near Bremo

No injuries reported

BY HEATHER MICHON
CORRESPONDENT

A coal train derailed in southeastern Fluvanna County at around 5 a.m. on Tuesday (Jan. 7).

The Fluvanna County Sheriff's Office and Fluvanna Volunteer Fire Department units from Palmyra and Fork Union were called to the scene at 4:53 a.m. No injuries were reported, "and at this time, no immediate environmental concerns have been found," said Capt. Aaron Hurd of the sheriff's office.

The train, carrying at least 25 coal cars, was heading eastbound on the Rivanna Subdivision, the section of CSX track that parallels the James River from Scottsville to Columbia. The derailment occurred near Stearns, between Bremo and Columbia.

A preliminary report by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) stated, "25 cars were mangled up and they are having to dump the coal. HEPACO on scene installing silt fence to protect nearby stream."

HEPACO is an environmental clean-up company with an office in Richmond.

"All damaged cars have been moved to a nearby staging area for wrecking and train operations have resumed," said CSX spokesperson Sheriee Bowan on Thursday.

CSX has not disclosed the amount of coal dumped or whether mitigation efforts are ongoing. The cause of the derailment is unknown.

Cifers wins 10th District state senate seat

BY HEATHER MICHON
CORRESPONDENT



Luther Cifers. Submitted photo

Republican Luther Cifers was successful in his bid to win the 10th District state senate seat recently vacated by Rep. John McGuire.

McGuire, a Republican, is heading to Washington, D.C., after defeating his Democratic opponent, Gloria Witt, in the race for Virginia's 5th Congressional District.

When all the votes were tallied after Tuesday's special election (Jan. 7),

Cifers, a businessman and political newcomer, carried the 10th District by 58.8 percent to Democratic challenger Jack Trammell's 41.2 percent.

Those percentages were reversed in Fluvanna, where 57 percent of the vote went to Trammell and 42.8 percent to Cifers. Fluvanna was one of only three localities in the 10-county district to go for Trammell, along with Henrico and Prince Edward counties.

As a special election with early voting over the busy holiday weeks and Election Day immediately following a major winter storm, turnout was light through the district. Only 2,971 votes were cast in Fluvanna, a turnout rate of 14 percent.

Still, it was enough to send Cifers to Richmond.

"A lot of people believed in me and decided to trust me with this responsibility," he said in a statement after his victory. "I will do everything in my power to ensure that their trust is well placed."

Fluvanna Economic Development features new businesses; new additions

BY PAGE H. GIFFORD
CORRESPONDENT



The Baker Barista. Submitted photo

Fluvanna Economic Development unveiled some new businesses and exciting new happenings at other businesses recently.

Cunningham Creek Winery had added a new venture to its offerings, becoming Cunningham Creek Winery & Brewery. This expansion brings craft beer to its Fluvanna County location, making it the county's only farm brewery. Visitors can still savor Cunningham's award-winning wines and house-brewed beer. It joins 344 other breweries in Virginia, with almost half located in Fairfax, Loudoun, and Prince William counties. Collectively Virginia breweries produce 460,000 barrels of beer annually.

"Our customers wanted a place they could relax with friends and relatives who preferred beer to wine, so after a lot of paperwork and planning, we're excited to be the first brewery in Fluvanna," said Cunningham Creek owner Debby Deal.

Cunningham Creek's brewer, Tom Casto, currently makes on tap, 3-Dog IPA, along with Crush's Kolsch and Corky's Stout from Decipher Brewing in Charlottesville. Seasonal rotations will bring new flavors throughout the year.

Family-owned and operated, Cunningham Creek Winery & Brewery welcomes not only wine lovers and craft beer enthusiasts, but also families, dogs, and picnics. Visitors can enjoy weekly live music, monthly team trivia music bingo, and other fun events throughout the year. It will be closed for January and will reopen on Feb. 1. For more information and to view their events calendar, visit their website at www.cunninghamcreek.wine.

In other business news, Fluvanna County lowered its commercial kitchen fees. In December, the Fluvanna County Board of Supervisors voted to reduce rental costs for the commercial kitchen, making it more affordable for food-based entrepreneurs. Residents now pay \$25/hour (down from \$35), and non-residents pay \$30.25/hour (down from \$40.25).

The Fluvanna County Commercial Kitchen is a licensed commercial kitchen certified for food production. It is a vital resource for those looking to grow their operations while staying

compliant with health and agricultural regulations.

Equipment includes a six-burner stove, large refrigerator and freezer, and stainless steel prep and serving lines. The kitchen is ideal for start-ups, home-based businesses, and established food ventures, including caterers, food trucks, bakers, and specialty food producers.

To learn more about how the kitchen can help your business, schedule an initial consultation with the Economic Development Office by emailing econdev@fluvannacounty.org.

A new way to exercise has arrived. Located next door to Wahoo BBQ, REVolution is a fitness operation offering indoor cycling and yoga classes that change both body and mind. Their modern low-lit studio is designed to help participants focus on themselves, providing a serene environment for intention and connection.

Their REV cycling classes cater to all fitness levels with three purposeful methods: RPM for endurance, elevation for strength, and velocity for power. Every session ends with 'Reflection REV,' a freeing time to ride in the dark, reconnecting to yourself in a powerful and personal way.

In addition to their cycling classes, there are their zero gravity yoga sessions, supported by science and designed to nurture the body and spirit. Whether you're new or a seasoned yogi, their sessions offer a space for restoration, balance, and inner connection. Their goal for everyone at REVolution is not about competition or skill level, it's about the transformative power of intentional movement by embracing mindfulness and creating a sense of empowerment with every pose.

In other food news, The Barista Baker travels around to different locations, serving those literally on the run. It serves hot coffee, lattes, etc., and home-baked goodies. The Barista Baker goes where there is no one serving hot coffee, making sure everyone gets a good start for their morning. Places on its itinerary include the Palmyra courthouse, E.W. Thomas, and Effort Baptist Church. The business is closed on Mondays and Saturdays. Tasty home-baked goods offered include sourdough bread, carrot cake cupcakes, cookies, and coffee cake. Visit The Baker Barista on Facebook for days times, and locations.

Hardware Hills Vineyard has some upcoming events for visitors, including trivia and live music on Friday evenings. Check out its calendar of events at <https://www.hardwarehills.com/>.

PUBLIC NOTICE



Notice

The Fluvanna County School Board voted unanimously on January 8, 2025, to hold their regular school board meetings on the second Wednesday of each month unless otherwise noted. The meetings will begin with a closed session at 5:30 p.m., followed by the regular meeting starting at 6:30 p.m. All meeting information is available for review at www.fluco.org. The meetings will take place in the auditorium at the Fluvanna County School Board Office located at 14455 James Madison Highway, Palmyra VA.

RUDY TALKS TAXES

BY RUDY GARCIA, OWNER, RIVANNA WOODS FINANCIAL / TAX SERVICES

Creating a New Year Financial Review Some Great Ideas to Consider



Now's the perfect time to review your financial health and set yourself up for success in 2025. The following checklist can help you organize your goals, identify areas for improvement, and make informed decisions about your money.

- **Calculate your net worth.** Add up all your assets (savings, investments, property and other valuables). Then subtract your liabilities (what you owe others) from these assets to calculate your net worth. Then compare this figure to last year's net worth. This measurement can provide valuable insights into your financial progress. If your net worth has decreased, identify the contributing factors and create a plan to address them.
- **SMART your goals.** Establish your financial goals and then define them using the SMART process: specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound. Whether your goal is saving for a home, planning a vacation, or paying off debt, break your goals into actionable steps with clear deadlines.
- **Identify hidden spending traps.** Review your spending habits. Compare your total income with your expenses to identify areas where you overspent. Look for patterns and consider categories where you can reduce costs in 2025. For example,

small adjustments like dining out less frequently or finding more affordable subscription options can add up over time.

- **Build up or top off your emergency fund.** An adequately funded emergency account is crucial for your financial health. Assess your current emergency fund balance, aiming to save three to six months worth of expenses.
- **Give your insurance policies a check-up.** Review your existing policies, including health, life, home, auto, and disability insurance. Consider whether your coverage meets your current needs and then adjust limits or add coverage for any new circumstances. Common examples include starting a family or purchasing a home.
- **Set up quarterly money check-ins.** Schedule regular financial reviews throughout the year to evaluate your progress toward your goals and to address unexpected hurdles you encounter. These check-ins provide an opportunity to adjust your budget, update your goals, and celebrate milestones, such as paying off a credit card or reaching a savings target.
- **Invest in your education.** Invest in your financial knowledge. Read books, attend workshops, or follow reputable financial experts to stay informed about money management best practices. Knowledge is a powerful tool for achieving financial independence.
- **Look for tax-saving opportunities.** There are a number of ways to lower your taxable income and qualify for tax deductions and tax credits for any and all taxpayers!

By taking these steps, you'll be well on your way to making 2025 a year of financial success. Remember, small, consistent actions can lead to significant progress over time. We look forward to serving both returning and new clients this year. Remember to call 434-442-4044 or email info@rwftaxservices.com to set up your appointment!

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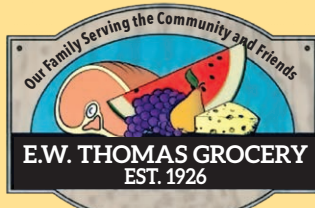


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FROZEN
Stouffers Salisbury Steak or Meatloaf/9.6 oz. .. 2/\$6
Stouffers French Bread Pizza 11-13 oz. 2/\$6
Blue Bell Ice Cream 1/2 gal. \$6.99
Hanover Vegetable Soup Mix 14 oz. .. 3/\$5



FUMA to participate in the 2025 Presidential Inauguration Parade

PRESS RELEASE

Fork Union Military Academy has been selected to participate in the 2025 Presidential Inauguration Parade, a prestigious event showcasing organizations and institutions from across the nation.

Approximately 150 of the Academy's Corps of Cadets will march down Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, D.C., representing the Commonwealth of Virginia and the values of discipline, leadership, and service that are the foundation of Fork Union Military Academy's mission.

The Presidential Inauguration Parade is a historic tradition, symbolizing the peaceful transfer of power and celebrating the diversity and unity of the United States. Participation is by invitation only, extended to groups that exemplify excellence and dedication in their communities.

"This is a tremendous honor for our cadets and our entire Fork Union Military Academy community," said Capt. Mark Black, president of the Academy. "To march in such a momentous event is not only a once-in-a-lifetime experience for our young men but also a testament to the hard work, discipline, and commitment they display every day."

The Academy will begin preparations immediately, fine-tuning their marching routines and ensuring they represent the Academy with the highest level of precision and pride.

Fork Union Military Academy has a long-standing tradition of excellence in education and character development, producing leaders who embody integrity, respect, and responsibility. Participation in the 2025 Presidential Inauguration Parade is a continuation of this legacy, bringing national recognition to the Academy and its mission.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

- Keep letters under 350 words.
- Refrain from personal attacks.
- No letters that have been sent to other newspapers.
- Include your name, address & phone # for verification.
- We reserve the right to edit letters.

Submit via email to: editor@fluvannareview.com
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Palmyra, VA 22963

You will get an email confirmation that your letter has been received. If you don't, contact the editor directly.

Virginia Skyline Girl Scouts kick off 2025 cookie season

PRESS RELEASE

The Virginia Skyline Council has kicked off the 2025 Girl Scout Cookie season, a time when Girl Scouts everywhere hone their entrepreneurial skills as they find new and inventive ways to sell cookies, unboxing brighter futures for themselves. With the much-anticipated cookie season back in full swing, cookie lovers can rejoice as they indulge in the classic cookie lineup.

The 2025 cookie lineup is jam-packed with the full spread of highly sought after cookie flavors, including Thin Mints, Samoas, Tagalongs, Do-si-dos, and more. At the close of the 2025 cookie season, the beloved Girl Scout S'mores cookie flavor will be retired. Girl Scout S'mores enthusiasts can get their hands on the last of these favorite sweet treats by reaching out to a Girl Scout seller or troop or booth sale (Cookie Finder: www.gsvsc.org/cookies).

When girls participate in the Girl Scout Cookie Program, the largest entrepreneurial program in the world, they acquire a host of invaluable entrepreneurial skills, including goal setting, money management, decision-making, people skills, and business ethics. Each box of cookies sold allows Girl Scouts to develop an inextinguishable entrepreneurial spirit, gaining courage,

confidence, and character as they conquer new feats and embark on new adventures. Girl Scouts obtain transferable life skills as they earn a variety of badges and awards, including Cookie Business badges, Financial Literacy badges, Cookie Entrepreneur Family pins and Entrepreneur badges.

This season, Virginia Skyline Council calls on community members to support their favorite cookies—and the girls behind each box. All proceeds from cookie sales stay with Virginia Skyline Council troops to fuel inspiring experiences throughout the year including camp, amazing trips, service projects, and much more.

How to Purchase Girl Scout Cookies This Season

- Girl Scout Cookie season runs until March 31 in the Virginia Skyline Council region. Fans of Girl Scout Cookies can support Girl Scouting by purchasing cookies for \$6 a box in a few different ways:
- If you know a registered Girl Scout, reach out to her to purchase cookies.
- If you don't know a Girl Scout, visit www.gsvsc.org/cookies to use the official Girl Scout Cookie Finder to find cookie booths in your area. Can't find a local booth? Then contact us at info@gsvsc.org and we'll find a local troop to fix that

cookie craving you have!

- Beginning Feb. 21, enter your zip code into the Girl Scout Cookie Finder at www.girlscoutcookies.org to purchase from a local Girl Scout troop online for shipment to your door or to donate cookies to first responders and local causes.
- You can also text COOKIES to 59618

to stay informed about how to purchase Girl Scout Cookies now and in the future.

Girl Scouts in grades K–12 can start their journey to fun, friendship, and new experiences by joining the world's largest entrepreneurial organization for girls at any point in the year: www.gsvsc.org/join =

Mystery boom may have been explosive target

BY HEATHER MICHON
CORRESPONDENT

The cause of the loud boom that rattled windows and jangled some nerves across a wide swath of Fluvanna and Albemarle counties at around 5 p.m. on Sunday (Jan. 12) is still unconfirmed, but the most likely explanation seems to be the detonation of a Tannerite target near the county line.

Tannerite is the brand name of an explosive charge used by target shooters. When a high velocity bullet strikes the target, it explodes.

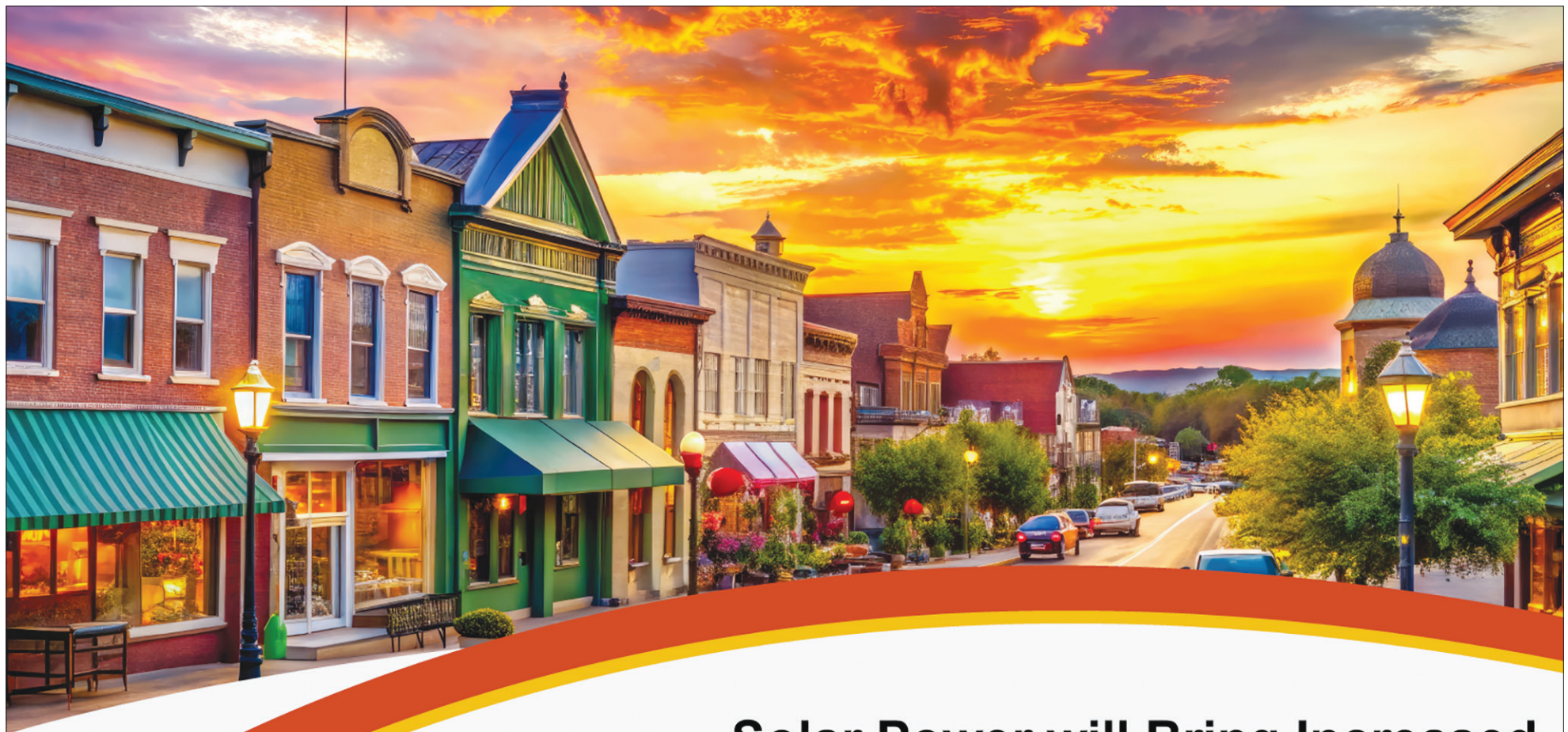
Capt. Aaron Hurd of the Fluvanna County Sheriff's Office said the department had received calls about the boom.

"Deputies were responding to check out the western area of the county but were informed that Albemarle County believed they had located the source

and that it wasn't in Fluvanna," he said.


Logan Bogert, a spokesperson with the Albemarle County Police Department said their department had received a 911 call at 5:07 p.m. from a resident in the 3200 block of Martin Kings Road who alleged "a neighbor was shooting at Tannerite. However, we are unable to confirm the source of the reported noise at this time."

Tannerite is technically legal to use in Virginia. The targets are made up of aluminum powder and oxidizers which are mixed by the user. Because the kit is sold as separate components which are not themselves explosive, it is not regulated by the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives.



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Supervisors may consider meals tax

BY HEATHER MICHON
CORRESPONDENT

A meal tax may be on the agenda for the Board of Supervisors in 2025.

Fluvanna voters rejected a meals tax in a 2018 referendum, triggering a six-year cooling period before it could be revisited. In 2019, the state law changed to allow boards to implement the tax without a referendum.

Whether or not Fluvanna's supervisors want to take that step prompted a lengthy discussion at their first meeting of the year on Wednesday (Jan. 8).

The meals tax would apply to the two dozen county restaurants and in-store delis serving ready-to-eat foods, but it would not apply to groceries.

Several neighboring counties have instituted meal taxes. Charlottesville and Albemarle charge the highest rates at 6.5 and 6 percent, respectively, while Louisa, Greene, and Nelson counties each charge 4 percent.

County Administrator Eric Dahl estimated a 5 percent tax rate could net the county between \$300,000 and \$600,000 annually.

Supervisor Tony O'Brien (Rivanna) noted that those figures could rise significantly once the Wawa at Zion Crossroads opens. "The average Wawa makes \$13 million annually, with about 50 percent of that coming from deli and prepared foods," he said.

O'Brien, along with Mike Sheridan (Columbia) and Tim Hodge (Palmyra), supported taking the issue up for a vote in the coming weeks or months.

"When you only have two tax levers to pull—real estate and personal property—if you need to increase or decrease, it's on one of those two," said Hodge. "Isn't it better to have three or four?"

Sheridan suggested some of the money could be set aside to pay for future school construction projects.

Chris Fairchild (Cunningham) and Mike Goad (Fork Union) were more skeptical. Fairchild, in particular, saw it as another burdensome tax on county residents.

While a meals tax would theoretically be paid in part by people passing through the county, "I don't know that I can go back into my area and say, 'This isn't a tax on you,' when we have one restaurant that only people in Fork Union eat at," said Goad.

With a majority of members in favor of moving forward, county staff will bring a proposed ordinance to the floor at a future meeting.

Waterline

A long-running discussion over building a mile-long extension to the Zion Crossroads waterline may have come to an end, as supervisors voted 4-1 to deny future action on the project.

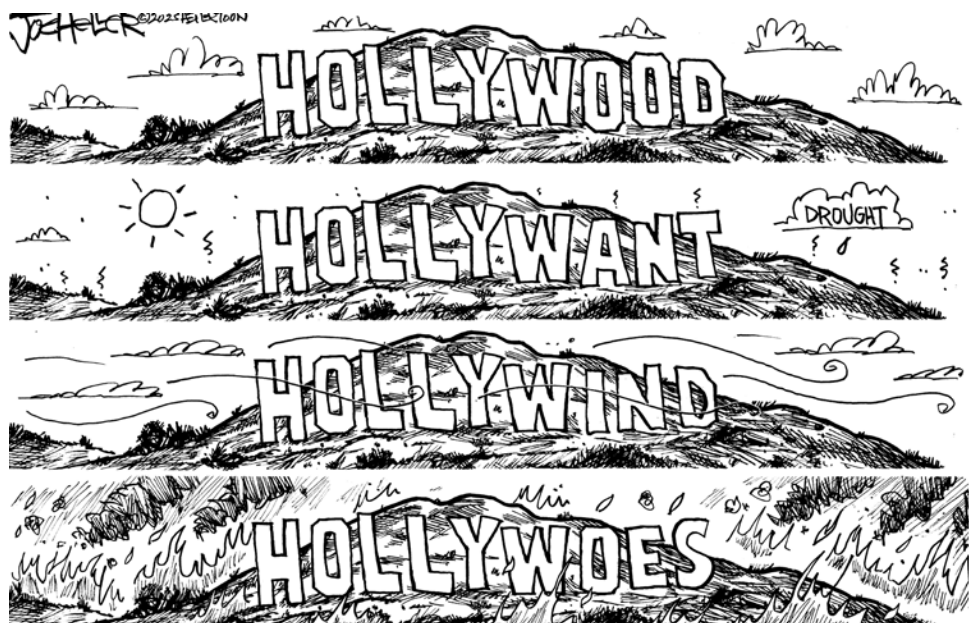
The West Waterline Extension was proposed by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to give relief to a cluster of houses whose wells were fouled by a petroleum release several years ago. Extending the waterline 1.1 miles further down Rt. 250 would provide clean municipal water to those households.

DEQ offered the county \$1 million to facilitate the construction of the extension, but as Dahl explained, the ballooning costs of construction had pushed the costs over \$2 million. He presented several potential funding options if the supervisors wished to move forward.

In their deliberations, some of the supervisors argued that the limited opportunities for business development on that section of Rt. 250 made the extension a poor investment for the county in the short term.

Organization

At the top of the meeting, Fairchild and O'Brien were unanimously elected as chair and vice-chair for the year. Meetings will continue to be held twice a month in the main courtroom of the county courthouse. The first meeting of each month will start at 5 p.m., and the second meeting will begin at 6 p.m.



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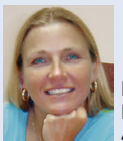
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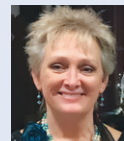
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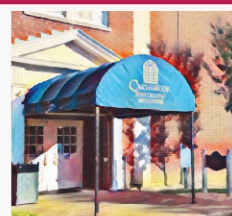


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School Board discusses funding support positions

Includes instructional assistants, reading and math specialists

BY HEATHER MICHON
CORRESPONDENT

In one of the first public comments of 2025, a citizen complained the members of the School Board do not engage enough during their monthly meetings.

"I think a couple of you are athletic coaches, and I hope you're not bringing the same enthusiasm to whatever you coach as you are here, because it's not enough," he said. "I believe there needs to be more dialogue amongst you all. There's a couple who really voice their opinions."

Whether because of this comment or the issues under discussion, most of the members did have some vigorous debate throughout the meeting on Wednesday night (Jan. 8).

Funding sources

Director of Federal Programs Gemma Soares gave a presentation on support staff positions – including instructional assistants and reading and math specialists – that had been funded under a COVID-era federal program that ended in mid-2024.

How to fund the positions for the long-term showed an ideological split among some board members.

None of the members argued that the support positions, particularly reading specialists, should be eliminated.

Fluvanna currently has three reading specialists in the elementary schools, one in the middle school, and a part-time position at the high school. While this meets or exceeds the number required by the state, Fluvanna lags behind neighboring districts.

Charlottesville schools, with a student population not much larger than Fluvanna, have 24 reading specialists. Louisa County has six reading specialists and 15 licensed reading interventionists.

"Obviously Albemarle and Charlottesville have way more money than do, but I feel like we're just scraping by with these positions," said Danny Reed (Fork Union).

He encouraged the district to ask for the number of specialists they thought were needed and see if they could quantify what increased support could do for school test scores and other metrics.

This could put the board in a strong position to ask for additional funding from the Board of Supervisors in the upcoming Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26) budget.

Chair Andrew Pullen (Columbia) and James Kelley (Palmyra) debated the merits of grant funding and state funding versus local funding.

"I would much rather fund one of these positions with local funding than accept the state money and hope that

it works out in years in the future," said Pullen.

Kelley argued the value of taking grants or state money in the short term and then figuring out long-term funding as needed. "I don't know why you wouldn't put the money where the need is," he said.

Library review committee

Questions about the appeal process for a book removed from circulation at the high school led to a debate over whether or not to even keep the book evaluation committee going forward.

The Learning Resources Review Committee (LRRC) spent much of 2024 evaluating more than a dozen challenged books and eventually voted to retain all books except one. They also made some recommendations on how to handle future book challenges.

Since the LRRC technically lapsed at the end of 2024, the board would have to vote to reappoint the citizen representatives.

Rather than have a dedicated committee, there was some discussion of just handling challenges at the board level.

Kelley argued that getting all members to attend the monthly meeting was hard enough. "How on earth do we think that we're going to get all the board members here to read the books?"

An alternative would be to disband the committee. The type of mass challenge of multiple titles presented in 2023 had not recurred in 2024 and seemed unlikely to happen in the near future.

Reed, in particular, saw the committee as a "whole waste of time" and any further discussions about the committee was a distraction from their core mission as a board.

"This conversation has nothing to do with education," he said.

"Actually, it has everything to do with education," countered Kelley.

With no motion on the table, Pullen closed the discussion and put it on the agenda for the February meeting. "Everybody needs to come ready to decide whether they want to keep the committee or not."

Organization

At the top of the meeting, Pullen and Andre Key (Rivanna) were reelected as chair and vice chair. Meetings will continue to be held on the second Wednesday of each month and begin at approximately 6:30 pm.

Board members will participate in a half-day seminar on the FY26 budget on Jan. 24 from 9 a.m. to noon at the administration building auditorium.



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MASTER GARDENERS GARDEN EXPO: Garden Expo with Seed Share! Free Seeds! Seeds not required from customers. Receive Gardening Info. Raffle Baskets! Door Prizes! Come Saturday-Jan. 18, 2025. Time: 9:30 am – 12:30 p.m. Location: Louisa County Middle School, 1009 Davis Highway, Mineral, VA 23117. Sponsors: Louisa Extension Master Gardeners. Inclement Weather Date is Jan. 25, 2025.

FLUVANNA COMMUNITY SINGERS: It's time to sing! Spring Concert is scheduled for May 2, & May 3, 2025 at the Central Elementary School. Rehearsals will begin Thursday, January 23, 2025 at the Fluvanna Co High School (Parking on lower level on left of school by the buses, come to the Music Room) No Auditions! Sign up starts Thursday, at 6:30 pm. Ends, Thursday, Feb. 6, 2025. Dues are \$20 per season. Questions? Call Adele: 434.962.1928.

VETERANS BREAKFAST: Central Virginia Veterans will be holding their monthly 'G.I. style' breakfast on Saturday, January 25, 2025. Time - 8:15 a.m. at Wahoo BBQ & Grill, Slice Road Gate, Lake Monticello. Cost is \$12 per person (cash only please). Veterans and spouses/friends are welcome. Questions? Contact Paul Bethke (703) 965-8363.

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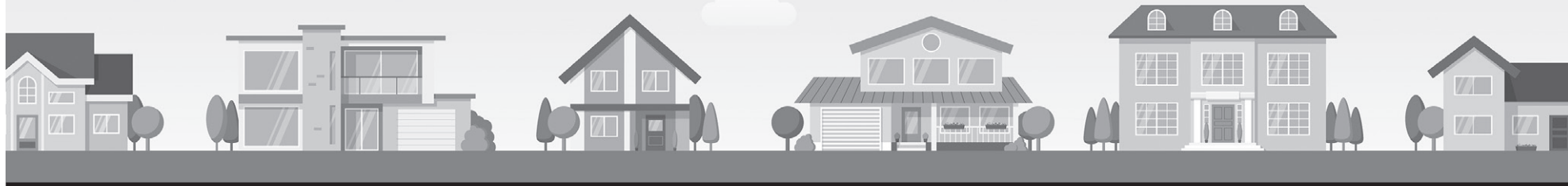
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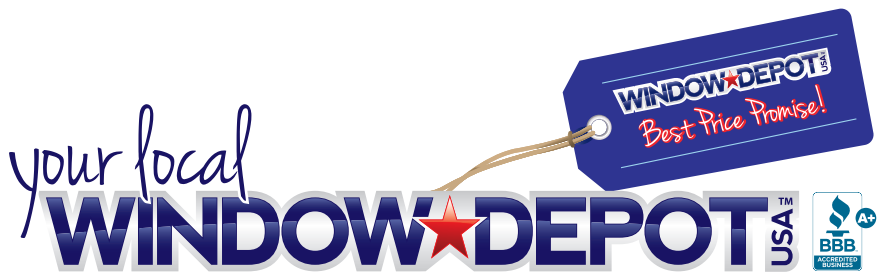
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Virginia corn growers top national yields contest despite tough season

VIRGINIA FARM BUREAU PRESS RELEASE

The 2024 corn-growing season was challenging for farmers in Virginia, who struggled with dismal harvests after a long summer drought followed by heavy rains. Corn acres harvested for grain last season are estimated at 350,000 acres statewide, down 20,000 acres from 2023, according to the National Agricultural Statistics Service.

But some Virginia growers still managed to produce high yields of quality corn and earned national recognition.

Charles City County farmer David Hula of Renwood Farms Inc. has topped nationwide yields for the 13th time, producing a 490.63 bushels-per-acre yield in the 2024 National Corn Growers Association Corn Yield Contest. Sharing accolades in the irrigated strip-till category is his son, Craig, who placed second with 461.30 bushels per acre. Heath A. Cutrell of Cutrell Farms in Chesapeake and Robbie Newcomb of Liberty Springs Farm in Hanover County also topped the national list in their respective production categories.

"It's remarkable to see Virginia's continued presence among the nation's top corn growers," noted Robert Harper, grain marketing specialist for Virginia Farm Bureau Federation. "Everybody in Virginia agriculture appreciates their work ethic, use of science and new technology, environmental stewardship, and the importance they put on maximizing relationships in their sector."

The 60th annual contest drew nearly

7,800 entries from farmers in 45 states. Entrants across the 10 production categories had verified yields averaging 284 bushels per acre.

Hula, who has broken the corn yield world record three times, said there is no "silver bullet" to growing a productive crop.

"I like to say there's three great things that produce high yield and corn," he said. "A good Lord blesses you. Number two, you got to have Pioneer® (variety) seed. Number three, you've got to have (the green) John Deere paint. But it's a whole system that takes it from the planter to in-season management to harvesting."

Eight-time yields winner Cutrell was ranked first nationally in the non-irrigated production category, at 350.18 bushels per acre. However, he noted that's a 50-bushel drop since 2023.

Rain was hit or miss during the summer drought, he said, but he got just enough in the right spots.

"It was not an enormous yield," Cutrell continued. "But where we picked that corn, we were getting small amounts of rain, maybe a tenth of an inch. It was just enough to make it happen."

Had they planted acreage any further south, it would have succumbed to the dry weather, he added.

"We do all we can during the growing season with what we have, without any irrigation," he said. "We dot our i's and cross our t's—and our fingers—and that's the best we can do."

Community Calendar



FLUVANNA
County Calendar



QR Code provided by the
Fluvanna Leadership
Development Program

Free Wellness Clinic

Hygeia Wellness Group is back on **Jan. 18** with a new program called "Four Key Strategies to Rest, Reset and Restore." Join Anna DeLong, LCSW, CEAP, NPT-C, Mindfulness Teacher, in Terrace Room B from 3-4:15 p.m. at the Lake Monticello Ashlawn Clubhouse to learn some simple strategies that have been shown to successfully reset the nervous system and set the stage to rest and restore. If you need gate clearance, please email Cynthia Moore at cynhygeia145@gmail.com

Veterans breakfast

Central Virginia Veterans will be holding their monthly 'G.I. style' breakfast on Saturday, **Jan. 25** at 8:15 a.m. at Wahoo BBQ & Grill, Slice Road Gate, Lake Monticello. Cost is \$12 per person (cash only please). Veterans and spouses/friends are welcome. Questions? Contact Paul Bethke (703) 965-8363.

Cville Flute Ensemble to perform

The Cville Flute Ensemble will perform on **Feb. 2** at 3 p.m. at St. John's Episcopal Church, Columbia. 43 Washington Street. Admission is free.

Food Bank

Fluvanna MACAA Food Bank is located in the old Carysbrook High School. To get food from the food pantry bring a photo ID as proof of Fluvanna residency. Open: **Monday through Friday**, 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. To donate directly to the food bank call 434-842-2521 to find out which foods are most needed. Cash and food donations gratefully accepted.



Photo: Denice Flynn & Ken Winton

The LMOA Board of Directors, the General Manager, LMPD, and Senior Staff want to extend a warm thank you to the LMOA employees who dedicated themselves this week to keeping our community safe! If you see any of these people out and about, please take a minute to thank them for their commitment to Lake Monticello. We're also grateful to the residents who heeded the warnings and chose to stay off the roads as much as possible. Because most stayed home, only a few minor crashes were reported. Tracy Chandler also commended the Facilities & Operations Team (F&O) for their hard work during this storm event, with a special shout-out to F&O Manager Ken Winton and Coordinator Denice Flynn for their planning and execution of this winter storm recovery. Preparation and planning begin in early September and are much more complex than one would expect. According to Tracy, "Winter Storm Recovery plans need to stay flexible because storms are

unpredictable. F&O has six plow trucks, a dump truck with a plow, and four salt spreaders. We have a sand/salt mixture for pretreat and one for traction once the storm starts, covering 62 miles of road. We prioritize roads based on the number of homes they serve. Jefferson serves 3,500 homes, so it is the top priority. Once a storm hits, my team of 17 quickly transitions from a Monday - Friday daylight job into a 24-hour around-the-clock operation. To keep our drivers and residents safe, we try our best to limit shift driving time to 10 hours. All these factors must be taken into account to run a successful operation."

In addition to Ken and Denice, Tracy would also like to spotlight these men and women's dedication to making Lake Monticello a better place:

Steve Johnson – 23 years with LMOA; Tommy Shifflet – 19 years; Rodney Lamb – 7 years; Mike Via – 5 years; Russell Wilkins – 4 years; Mike Gentry – 4 years; Hunter Halliday – 3 years; Travis

Perry – 3 years; Josh Myers - 1 year; John Harp – 1 year; Ronnie Oakley – 6 months; Jacob Perry – 6 months; Stanley Payne – 2 months; Sarah Blackwell – 2 months.

Thank you, everyone!

Blood Drive at Ashlawn

The American Red Cross will visit Lake Monticello on January 20th for a blood drive. To make an appointment, call 1-800-Red Cross.

Billing Statements Underway

We thank our Finance Team, particularly Kim Crowder and Kim Spitler, who worked through the snowstorm to keep billing on schedule. They sent out the Annual Billing Statements on January 9, 2025 to all LMOA Members who chose electronic delivery, and paper statements will be on their way in just a day or two. Everyone can view their annual dues online by logging into their account. For your convenience, they also included the 2025 LMOA Dues and Fees Letter. It's a

good idea to take a moment to review it alongside your statement so you can stay in the loop about your payment options and all the helpful information it contains. This year, your Annual Barcode Renewal isn't included in this statement and will be billed to you next month. Be on the lookout for that at the end of January. Thank you for your attention!

Boat Slips and Racks Renewal

Though payments aren't due until March 1, 2025, the Marina is already accepting payments for boat slips and kayak/canoe racks. Be sure to secure your spot as soon as possible because payments for slips and racks are late after March 31, and unpaid spots will be offered to the next person on the waiting list. The Marina is open Thursday - Monday from 10 AM - 4 PM and closed on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. For more information, visit the Marina at 962 Jefferson Drive or call 434-589-1692.

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