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Town builds for the future

BY BRIAN CARLTON

FARMVILLE

To someone who hasn't been by in a while, Farmville looks a bit different. If you walk around the downtown area, you can see it in the store windows or in the fact that previously empty spaces now have shops inside. Drive around town and you notice it in the skateboard park renovations, the new splashpad that's almost ready to open and the brand new arena at Longwood University, which draws in musicians, comedians, stage acts and the occasional college basketball game. It all helps someone see not just how far the town has come, but where it's headed in the future as well.

"There isn't one project that sits out from the others, but they're all important," said Farmville Town Manager Scott Davis. "For me, one's not bigger than the other but we've been able to do things for different sets of the community."

His comments were echoed by Farmville Mayor Brian Vincent, who said he was glad to see the council willing to tackle the future from a number of angles.

"From playground improvements to public

safety, from investment of dollars to investments in the future, I feel like we are addressing issues from multiple angles and increasing our odds of continued success as we move forward," Vincent said.

The first-term mayor, who was elected in November 2022, helped make some of this happen by doing things differently when he first took office. He got the council to agree to a retreat, to

discuss not just goals for the current year, but create a road map of sorts that staff could work from for two, three and four years down the road. From that event, the council developed its first ever mission statement, with ranked priorities as to what members would like to see done. After all, each member on council agreed that they want to see Farmville continue to grow and develop. The key is this work plan or road map helps chart out how to get there.

"Farmville is poised for a breakout," Vincent



Coming this summer, people will be able to try out Farmville's new splashpad, over near Lions Park. Work is expected to be finished on it in the spring.

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said. “That’s the sentiment I hear over and over again. The key is to balance that enthusiastic race towards continued prosperity with the principles and values that have made us a special small town. It’s all possible, but it takes calculated intention, and a focus on what is best for the whole rather than the few.”

FROM SKATE PARKS TO SPLASHPADS

So what exactly has been done to move the town forward? One of the first things usually brought up is the splashpad project, so we’ll start with that. The town council agreed to build a Farmville splashpad, placed on the same piece of property as Lions Park, but closer to the trail. Lions Park is located on West Third Street, at the entrance to the Wilck’s Lake island area. This Farmville splashpad will be approximately 5,000 square feet and is being built by Mesa, Arizona based Splash Zone LLC, using money from the town’s American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding.

And when we talk about a splashpad, it’s exactly that. This is a place where people can bring their families and go cool off in the summer. The final work on the project will be finished in the next few months, as it’s been delayed due to winter weather. But it should be ready to open in late spring.

Beyond that, the town staff has also renovated the playground near the Barbara Rose Johns Farmville-Prince Edward Community Library and started looking at ways to improve the skate park. The playground renovation includes upgrading the old equipment and putting in a new shade cover. Meanwhile, over at Wilck’s Lake Park, the town staff is working with the American Ramp Company to renovate and add to the existing skatepark. To help choose what to add, Farmville created a survey for residents to let them know what they want to see for this improved skatepark. For this project, the existing elements at the skatepark will be updated and



Farmville staff are also working to update the town’s skate park, listening to a survey of residents about what to renovate.

undergo a safety check. American Ramp Company originally installed the skatepark and will make sure the renovated park is up to standards. All of that will be happening in the next few months to come.

And then, there’s the work you might not see. The town council and staff used grant money from the American Rescue Plan to upgrade water and sewer infrastructure, replacing pieces that were decades old in parts. The council also recently launched a project to update all building infrastructure owned by the town, in order to make it more energy efficient. New water and parking meters are going up and you may notice some electric vehicle charging stations being assembled downtown.

looms ahead. Both Davis and Vincent see that Farmville needs affordable housing. People are less likely to move into an area or stay if they’ll be cost burdened to live there. That’s according to a Dec. 2022 study from the U.S. Census Bureau. The Census staff defines cost burdened as someone who has to pay more than 30% of their income for housing.

The problem for Farmville is that 22% of its current homeowners are cost burdened, according to that same Census study. The percentage jumps even higher when you start talking about renters. An estimated 44.8% of renters in the area fall under that label. Neither of those labels are beneficial when trying to attract new residents. That, Vincent says, is why he wants the town to consider a planned unit development ordinance (PUD).

Planned unit development is an

A QUESTION OF P.U.D.

But one of the biggest questions, as well as a major challenge, still

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ordinance, a zoning amendment. As it stands now, there's not much flexibility with Farmville's zoning ordinances. It allows developers to either build single family homes or apartments in specific places. Basically, if a PUD is allowed, a developer could come in and propose something outside of those rules that the planning commission and then the town council could look at.

As it stands, discussions have included four areas in town where a PUD model could make sense. One is the area of South Main Street and Clark Street, down by the Sheetz gas station. Another is the Sunchase area, with a possible front on East Third Street but behind the hotels. A third involves Merriwood Farms Road, in the area around and behind Walmart.

Vincent says he knows some people will be against the idea. But if Farmville is to continue growing and developing, "we must look at what is best for the community as a whole. Do we need more diverse housing? If the answer is yes, then how are we going

to get there? That question combined with economic development and stability of quality education stays at the forefront of my mind."

While the discussion over PUD will continue in planning commission and eventually Town Council meetings over the next few months, Vincent said it's part of the overall road map, needed to keep Farmville moving forward.

"If we can stay focused on investing in our community's recreational opportunities, updating our aging infrastructure, and maintaining our excellent services while increasing diverse housing; then we will succeed in making sure Farmville is poised to fulfill the dreams of its intergenerational population," Vincent said. "Farmville is a gem, filled with amazing advocates who pour their passion and purpose into making it a charming and vibrant town. My goal is to keep cultivating this fertile ground so that all of our community partners can continue to plant the seeds of tomorrow's fruit."



The biggest thing Farmville is focusing on involves more events, more activities to draw people into town.

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'The funky village at the end of the trail'

BY BRIAN CARLTON

PAMPLIN

When you ask Pamplin Mayor Sarah Blackburn to describe her town, she sums it up in one sentence.

"We just want to focus on being this really quaint, funky village at the end of the trail," she said.

That's a good way to describe Pamplin and also the development it's going through. All of the revitalization efforts highlight the community's unique identity.

If you're looking to find Pamplin, we suggest typing in 115 Main St., Pamplin into your GPS app of choice and start off at the town offices. That's only so that from there, you have options on multiple parts of the street. You can go down to MiPa's Table to get food, stop off at the farmers' market to get supplies

for your own home or visit the Train Depot to see what events are happening. This small community, which straddles the Appomattox County and Prince Edward County line along U.S. 460, has been focused on reinventing itself for a while now. Originally a big manufacturing and tobacco hub, the loss of those industries hit the town hard, to the point Pamplin registered just 199 residents as of 2000. But little by little, the residents are building their home back up, encouraging others to move in. By 2010, the population was back up to 219 and hit 232 as of 2020. Small steps, sure, but movement in the right direction.

"We've just been redeveloping and sort of finding what our niche could be," Blackburn said. "When it was established, Pamplin was very heavily



JOHN KARRATTI

Even a town as small as Pamplin has a post office, a place where you can get directions, send out letters and pick up packages.

dependent on tobacco as well as the manufacturing aspect. With all of those things no longer being viable economic avenues, we've been trying to find a way of making Pamplin self-sustaining again."

LET'S TALK ABOUT TRAILS AND TREATS

Part of that process involves the High Bridge Trail. 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.

For those of you wondering what High Bridge Trail is, it's a 31-mile long rail trail, designed around High Bridge. That's a railroad bridge more than 2,400 feet long and 160 feet high above the Appomattox River. Previously, the trail ended at Heights School Road.

A land purchase by the Virginia Department of Conservation and

Recreation from Norfolk Southern now enables the trail to extend another mile into Pamplin, with the western terminus parking lot square in town. Work on the parking lot is expected to be finished within the next two months, with fencing put up around the lot. Blackburn has recruited some of the town's artists to decorate the scene. Instead of your typical fencing, there will be a mural, created by local artists, welcoming everyone to Pamplin. That focus on creativity and local skill feels like a good way to let people know what they can expect in town, she said.

But beyond High Bridge Trail, the town has over the past year built a reputation for hosting special events. Hundreds of people poured into Main Street for a glimpse at Santa Claus this past Christmas, with an old fashioned Christmas parade featuring a good amount of the community. At the town's Trunk

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PHOTOS BY JOHN KARRATTI

The Town of Pamplin is becoming known for celebrations like last year's Christmas parade, activities that define "small town" life.

or Treat event for Halloween, they had almost 400 children, naturally coming with parents. And for each of these events, the downtown is decorated and folks get to see the unique sights.

"We're kind of a removed population center, so we want to give people something to do," Blackwell said. "We're just trying to get people out here to see Pamplin, to find out who we are."

And the town officials are looking at adding a few more celebrations to the list, beginning with a special event for the spring. An exact date or name for the event isn't set. The idea is to hold a celebration surrounding the end of work on the High Bridge Trail, but they're still

determining what it'll look like.

A COMMUNITY OF ARTISTS

Another part the town wants to highlight as part of their redevelopment is the growing community of artists. As it stands, they have two art shows a year, one in the spring and one in the fall. That all happens at the Pamplin Depot, also at 115 Main St. We'll get back to that in a minute.

The idea for an art show was originally envisioned by PALS volunteers in 2005 when the Appomattox County Library set up a branch in the Pamplin Depot. Around this same time, the Depot was fully renovated through a grant from the U.S. Department



The Town in many ways revolves around the Pamplin Train Depot. Everything from farmers' markets to author events is held inside.



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Recreation

High Bridge Trail | Sandy River Reservoir
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The Manor Golf Club, an 18-hole links course, is situated between the Town of Farmville and Hampden-Sydney College. The Town of Farmville offers Wilck's Lake, the Sarah Terry Walking Trail, Dogwood Trail, and a Skateboard Park. For the adventurous traveler, try ziplining at the Sandy River Outdoor Adventure Park in Rice, Virginia.



Three Virginia State Parks invite guests pursuing outdoor adventures: High Bridge Trail State Park, 31 miles long and great for hiking, bicycling, and horseback riding; Twin Lakes State Park, an important part of Civil Rights history and a popular choice for swimming, camping, hiking, and events; and Sailor's Creek Battlefield Historical State Park. Two additional state parks within 30 minutes of Farmville include Bear Creek Lake and Holliday Lake State Parks. For those that enjoy fishing,



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of Transportation with a 20% match in volunteer support from the Town of Pamplin. In 2007, Pamplin Depot Library received the Community Achievement in the Arts Award from Longwood Center for the Visual Arts. The Annual Art Show and Sale became a reality after these renovations. What started as a plan to showcase the Pamplin Depot Library has become a tradition for highlighting the work of local artists. Previous art shows have attracted local and talented artists working in a broad range of mediums. Fine art as well as pottery, primitive art and photography are usually represented.

Now here's where some more of the progress comes in. Remember the Depot mentioned earlier? Thanks to grant funding for the equipment and people willing to run the classes, Pamplin now has a list of exercise classes at the Depot, including yoga, free to the community several times a week. The

Depot also houses an indoor farmers market.

BRINGING IN BUSINESS

The biggest focus for Pamplin in 2024 is to fill up Main Street, to recruit businesses to move in. Blackwell said town officials want to do everything possible to make it easy for someone to launch their project in town.

"We've worked really hard on getting things going on main street, being appetizing to developers and individuals that are willing to put the money in," Blackwell said. "We try to get rid of red tape and minimize the process, so it's not intrusive."

She also points to the town's water and sewer system, as a benefit. They offer a water and sewer credit of up to \$500 off.

"It's looking to be an exciting year for our little town," Blackwell said. "We just want more people to come and pay us a visit."



PHOTOS BY JOHN KARRATTI

If you've got a sweet tooth, Bubbles' Sweet Dreams can help you out. The shop on Main Street has cookies and cupcakes during the winter months and adds in some ice cream for the summer.



Walking down on Main Street, you'll find the town's locally owned restaurant, MiPa's Table. Quiet on the outside, you'll find laughter and smiles indoors.

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County looks to solar

BY JEFF MOORE

LUNENBURG

Working on solar, attracting new business and correcting county boundary lines are among some of the work addressed during 2023 in Lunenburg County.

In a Monday, Jan. 22 interview, Lunenburg County Administrator Tracy Gee looked back at the past year, highlighting areas of focus that also included working with the school division on a safety grant, making improvements to the airport and working with companies on extending fiber broadband in the county.

“I would say that the main area of progress is that we were successful over the last 18 months with our review and adoption of the solar facilities ordinance and then subsequent applications being able to be processed,” Gee said.

County officials are now in the planning process to update the solar ordinance.

“We’re in a holding pattern as far as new solar goes,” she said. “We’re still working on processing current

solar facilities.”

Red Brick Solar, Dogwood Lane Solar, Apex Solar, ESA Solar Developers and Wheelhouse Solar were all in the mix of facilities being processed by the county.

Gee said the Director of Planning and Economic Development Taylor King has been busy working on these and more with the planning commission since she came to work full-time for the county.

“We’ve had a lot of people applying for conditional use permits and that’s been a welcome addition,” Gee said. Lunenburg County has seen several new businesses opening or locating there each month through 2023.

Asked what she believes is driving this interest in opening businesses there, she pointed to a couple of different factors.

“I really, honestly feel like it’s a concerted effort on the part of staff and legal to make sure that we’re prepared,” Gee said. “But it’s also responding to the stimulus in the community. You know, people being



BRIAN CARLTON

A look at one of the panels for Red Brick Solar going up. It’s one of five solar projects processed by the county.

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more active in getting out and lots of people realize and they'd rather run their business from their home because of COVID."

She also believes the county's zoning is a benefit to companies locating and opening here. The county is primarily zoned in one agricultural district.

"So in the agricultural district, everybody follows that same set of rules," Gee noted. "We're not saying, oh, in this area, you can do this, in this area you can do that."

While some people are not happy with the way the county is zoned, she said it has been helpful for growth and development in the rural areas.

Another factor is bringing King on board for the county.

"With Taylor being in that position and having a full-time person, it's made a big difference," Gee said, pointing out that the position was part-time for a couple of years and then was vacant for about a year.

"That has helped us having some-

body who really cares about the county in that position and wants to see things develop," she said.

COUNTY BOUNDARIES

The county also grew in an unusual way last year after issues with the county lines were found during the 2022 redistricting.

Gee said some jurisdictional anomalies on the county borders turned up as part of that process, particularly along the Charlotte-Lunenburg borderline.

"A large group of parcels that years and years ago in the 80s had been indicated that they were in



LUNENBURG COUNTY

The runway and the apron were recently repaved at the Lunenburg County Airport.

Charlotte, but they were technically in Lunenburg as far as jurisdictional lines go, she explained. "Finding that out, we have now had to go into a legal discussion with the landowners to try to get deeds done and corrected."

This borderline issue involves 52 parcels, with some slightly affected while others saw a bigger change.

"That has been a challenge, but we're working through it," Gee said, noting that use of GIS now cleared up issues from the 80s survey and a later one performed as part of mapping for a subdivision.

BROADBAND

Another important issue is the continued work to extend fiber broadband service throughout the county.

Gee said Kinex still has some areas as part of the broadband project the company and county have worked together on through grant funding.

The county's other internet provider, River Street Networks, is now working with Lunenburg officials to apply for new funding becoming available to assist with extending broadband in its services areas.

"We're working with them to try to figure out what our next step is to get a grant application in for the next grant funding," she said.

Gee hopes they are successful with receiving this grant so they can finish out the areas that do not have broadband. There are a few areas, mainly in the southwestern part of the county, where topography and rock prevent companies from extending service there.

"They're very sparsely populated," she said. "So this should help us get to near that 100%."

AIRPORT UPGRADES

Complete repaving to the runway and the apron was just recently completed at the Lunenburg County Airport, Gee said.

"That is a huge undertaking and it's a beautiful project completed," she said.

Additionally, the county recently removed some obstructions that were in the easement so the airport can get its license for automated instrument landings.

"So right now, we're on what they call day use or visual flight restrictions because we had the obstructions and it wasn't safe for flight if



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you couldn't see the obstructions," Gee said. "So, we soon hope to get our license back to instrument flight."

The airport also lost its tenant that operated a business there because the individual had to close it due to major health concerns.

"We do have a lead on a possible new tenant, Gee said. "We're excited about that as well.

With a 3,000-foot runway, it is not long enough for passenger private jets to land.

"But it does accommodate your smaller aircraft and it also connects to the old railroad bed," she said. "In the future, we hope to connect the town's rails-to-trails all the way out to our airport and then eventually try to get that from the airport to Kenbridge."

Gee said this would be huge for tourism and outdoor recreation.

SCHOOL SAFETY

Lunenburg County Schools underwent a big change in leadership last year, Gee said, noting that the superintendent retired along with staff in the division's finance department.

"I'm always here to help assist them with any questions they may have," she said. "And the school board and the board of supervisors are working well together to try to work through any issues as far as

funding and funding needs."

Right now the schools are using some construction funding to improve security and safety at the high school.

"I believe they have some plans for the elementary schools as well," she said, noting that a new security grant will help them with security at all four county schools.

RADIO UPGRADES

A project to upgrade the radio system that has been going on since 2021 will soon be complete.

Gee said the new system provides better radio coverage throughout the county.

"It will come to a close this month," she said. "We are very excited that is all in place. And the end users have been very pleased with their coverage."

Gee said she was at a recent fire department banquet and they were discussing how they now have coverage in areas that the old radios did not reach.

Victoria Town Manager Rodney Newton has worked with the county on the project, Gee said, noting he is very active with the statewide radio communications groups.

"He has been outstanding to help us in a local capacity, along with our consultant, to get that work done," Gee said.



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University experiences a year of growth

BY BRIAN CARLTON

A time of growth and development. No matter how you look at it, that's the best way to sum up what's happened and continuing to take place at Longwood University. Over the last year, multiple buildings have been constructed, new programs have been launched, some older ones have been redesigned and more expansion looms on the horizon.

We've made progress on a number of fronts," said Longwood spokesman Matt McWilliams, "including opening new buildings and beginning construction on others that will be a boon to the community."

The biggest piece that sticks in everyone's mind is naturally the new Joan Perry Brock Center on campus, which houses not only the school's basketball games, but also everything from concerts to comedy acts coming to Farmville. But we'll touch on that more in a moment. First, before construction, we need to recognize some significant achievements over the past year. That includes the work done by Farmville native Antonio Harvey, who became Longwood's second-ever Barry Goldwater Scholar. That's the nation's top undergraduate award for students planning careers in mathematics, science, or engineering research. He wasn't alone. Emily Robertson became Longwood's first Harry S. Truman Scholar. That's the nation's top scholarship for students interested in public service. So when we talk about progress and Longwood, university officials are quick to point out the national recognition their students are getting. They also point to new programs and redesigned old ones. For example, the university redesigned Elementary Education and Teaching, Elementary and Middle School Education and

LONGWOOD

Teaching to standalone degrees. They also created a new bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education for students who already picked up an associate degree in the field.

"(We're) keeping a focus on career paths for future graduates," McWilliams said. "We've also made strides in our non-curricular programs."

Some of those career path changes included new concentrations in community health, engineering physics, biochemistry, children's literature and pre-med. Progress, in this case, is all about expansion.

LOOKING BEYOND FARMVILLE

And there's been plenty of expansion

for Longwood this past year. Take, for example, work continuing on the Baliles Center. By that, we're referring to the Gerald L. Baliles Center for Environmental Education. The project has dramatically increased Longwood's reach, as it's set up in Westmoreland County. For those wondering, Westmoreland is in the Northern Neck, about two and a half hours from Farmville. The goal here, when everything is finished, is to have a facility designed for studying the environment and sustainability issues. The 662-acre property is covered with hundreds of acres of pine and hardwoods, as well as both natural and man-made wetlands. As it stands, the research lab has been fully constructed, a place where students from the main

campus can go and study environmental issues up close. Beyond that, the Baliles Center will include campus residential units, so Longwood students won't have to travel back and forth. It'll also have teaching spaces set up, as well as a dining facility.

LET'S TALK ABOUT NEARBY CONSTRUCTION

But construction isn't limited to other counties. The biggest, and most visible way, that Longwood has been growing is through the construction Farmville residents can see every day. Part of that includes a replacement for Wygal Hall, with Longwood building a new state-of-the-art home for music and music education. Currently



LONGWOOD UNIVERSITY

A look at the Joan Perry Brock Center, which houses the university's men's and women's basketball teams, along with concerts and other shows.

scheduled to open in spring 2027, the building will be accessible from Main Street and have classrooms, recital rooms and a 500-seat performance space where people from all over the region can come and listen to a number of performances. Work on that building is set to begin this summer.

You may have also noticed in town the construction happening at the corner of Fourth and Virginia streets. That's where the university's new facilities building will be located. Then, just a bit further down the road at the former Barnes & Noble location in Midtown Square, work is progressing on the Innovation Hub.

This project will have an impact not just on Longwood students, but on the community as a whole. The goal here is to create a place to help launch businesses that stay in Prince Edward County. If you have an idea for a business but don't know how to get it off the ground, the Hub's resources will be able to help. It's one part business accelerator and one part training ground. And this isn't just for residents. It's for Longwood students to experiment as well.

When construction is finished, the Farmville facility will include maker spaces, coworking spaces and train-

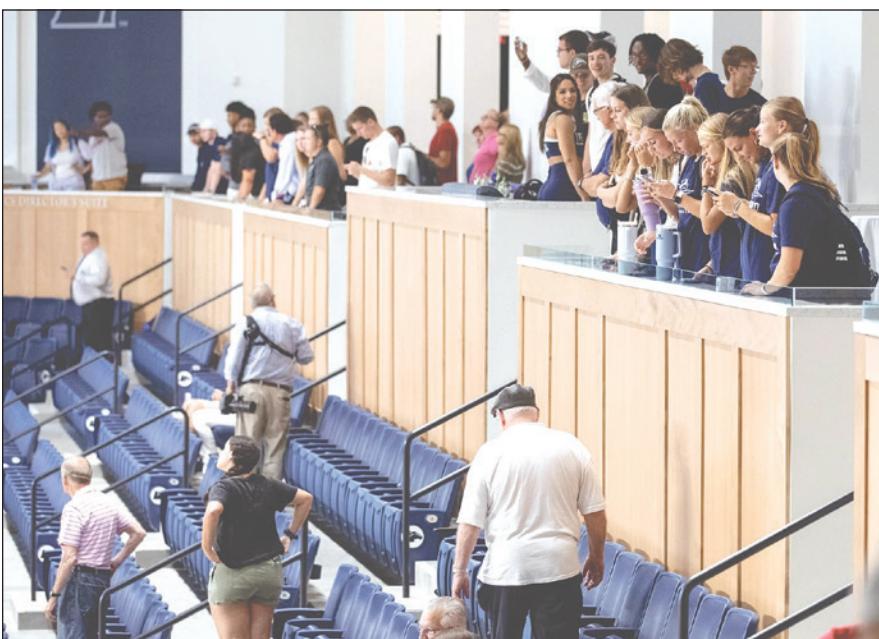
ing and gathering spaces as well as an office for training and consulting. The new facility will be available to host community courses in entrepreneurship and innovation; Southside Virginia Community College workshops and camps for trades, technology and STEM.

A NEW BEGINNING AT JPB

Finally, we can't talk about Longwood's progress without mentioning the Joan Perry Brock Center. The facility, which opened its doors in August of 2023, houses Longwood's men's and women's basketball programs, while also serving as a location for major concerts in the region. Oliver Anthony, for example, performed there in October, drawing a sold-out crowd for the facility of more than 4,000.

In her remarks during the opening in August, Joan Perry Brock, a Longwood graduate and former women's basketball player, summed up both the building's development and Longwood's overall growth through the years.

"My classmates, who call ourselves the Longwood Ladies, have been together for 63 years," Brock said. "In 63 years you see a lot of changes, and here at Longwood we have seen a lot of good, positive changes."



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For county, the future is solar

BY JEFF MOORE

CHARLOTTE

During 2023, Charlotte County saw action on the economic development front with companies seeking to locate solar facilities here and progress made at its industrial park.

Solar is already paying off for property owners in the way of tax reductions.

County Administrator Dan Witt said in a Friday interview that the Charlotte County Board of Supervisors got a \$500,000 payment for solar installation.

“It was their goal and gave that back to the citizens as in the form of a rebate or credit on their real estate tax bills,” Witt said. “That money all went back to the citizens.”

He explained that the county is allowed to provide the tax reduction

because that solar money was not included in the budget.

“It was considered excess real estate revenue and the board was allowed to vote and make the decision to give a one-time credit on tax bills for that solar money,” Witt noted.

This provided a reduction in real estate taxes of about 5%, he estimated. But it doesn’t mean someone with a \$100 tax bill would see exactly \$5 back.

“It’s approximate, but something like that,” he said.

Witt said supervisors and staff continue to look at solar development in the county, noting they still have four applications pending.

“Three of them will be going to public hearing on Feb. 14,” he said. That meeting is at 6 p.m. at the high school auditorium.



Solar is just one of multiple economic developments in Charlotte County.

“We’ll be looking at CPV, Goldman and Gibson projects,” Witt said. The fourth he said is still being reviewed.

The planning commission has some questions about the Lavender Solar project.

It was a busy year on the economic development front as county officials worked to “tier up” Charlotte’s Heartland Industrial Park.

This is a process that the state uses to rate the readiness of an industrial site, Witt said.

“We’re looking at up-tiering, which makes it more marketable,” he said. This process means the county is preparing a 10-acre site, where it is engineered and designed.

“So if somebody wants to come in, we can hand them a design of that,” Witt explained, noting that Timmons Group is working on it. “That’s an exciting thing to have that available and we have some interest.”

Witt noted in the Friday interview that he had a meeting later in the day to talk with a potential developer for a Heartland site.

During the past year, the county’s

industrial development authority sold the vacant Shaw building.

“I think they made carpet there and then it was a candy factory, which is an interesting transition. “But now it’s owned by Complete Underground, which is the company that’s working with River Street to install all of the county’s fiber north of Route 15. The IDA was pleased they sat on that building for a lot of years and now we’ve got somebody in it and using it.”

Witt said the county received a Department of Historic Resources grant last year for both outside and indoor renovations at the old clerk’s office that are now nearly complete.

“We’re very appreciative of that grant,” he said. “That will be available for either rent or for expansion or use if the county needs additional office space.”

PUBLIC SAFETY

The county established a new Department of Public Safety last year.

“We’ve hired the county’s first public safety director, Chris Russell, who’s also the chief of the Charlotte

Town of Keysville



Court House Volunteer Fire Department,” Witt said.

Russell has been working with Witt and the public safety committee in overseeing the Charlotte County Rescue Squad.

They have done a good job during 2023 with filling all of their positions, Witt said, along with providing much better rescue squad service to the county citizens. While there’s still a long way to go with the rescue squad, he said they’ve

made really good strides that he is pleased with. “We realized that we were losing employees and that our employees felt underpaid,” he said. “We did a classification compensation study and the board voted and implemented that policy effective Jan. 1, 2023. I think that was the first time that the county had ever undertaken that type of a project.”

Witt said it was productive and well received by the board of supervisors and much appreciat-

ed by the staff and the employees.

Additionally last year, the Virginia Fire and Safety Board did a fire and safety study for the county.

“We’ve been working with the public safety committee and Chris has been working on implementing that fire and safety study,” Witt said.

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schools that won General Assembly and local voter approval is adding up and will be providing the needed funding for capital improvement projects at county schools.

The tax was implemented in July 2022, with the first payment coming to the county in September of that year, Witt explained. As of the end of December 2023, there is \$1.6 million in that fund for school division renovations, upkeep and capital projects, Witt said pointing to the county treasurer's report.

Witt said most months see between \$60,000 and \$70,000 come into this sales tax fund, noting that the amount received in December is just more than \$66,000, which would be receipts for October as the money comes in two months later.

It is being put to use currently to replace windows at Randolph-Henry High School.

"They're using it for a lot of different renovations," Witt said, explaining this fund allows the board of supervisors and the school board to

pay as they go, rather than do debt service for the schools.

The school board approves projects for funding from the sales tax, which is then passed to the board of supervisors as a recommendation for approval.

"The board of supervisors will then appropriate the money," he said. "That has been a true blessing for our county to have that money to allow schools to do their renovation projects. Otherwise, it's tax increases or not doing them at all."

TOURISM

To greet visitors to Charlotte County, six new gateway entrance signs were approved last year by the board of supervisors.

Witt said the county received a \$30,000 American Rescue Plan Act grant that is going to help fund this project.

"Those have to be installed by the end of June this year," he said, noting they will be at key entry points into the county.

As Virginia prepares to mark its 250th anniversary, the county is supporting Patrick Henry's Red Hill in its plans for the celebration.

"That's really our primary and major tourism thing for the county," Witt said.

VA250 is the state's celebration of the 1776 American Revolutionary War with activities and events planned statewide leading up to and during 2026.

He said there are other large events that take place in the county, including the Knockdown Hunt Club's cross country bike races and other recreational activities.

Witt noted that during 2023 state forests were opened up for hunting last year.

"That's a huge recreational pool for Charlotte County because it now provides 5,000-plus acres of public hunting land," he said.

The board of supervisors sent a resolution to the Department of Forestry last year asking it to restrict hunting on Sundays to allow other activities one day a week. Witt said this would be for activities such as riding bikes, horseback riding and nature walks. The county should know this year if the request is approved.

"That's a really nice asset for the county for recreation," he said.

BROADBAND

Work continues to extend high-speed broadband in Charlotte County.

Witt said Empower Broadband's

work on this is a bit ahead of schedule in the southern part of the county.

"They have really rolled on the project down there and they've hooked up a lot of citizens with high-speed internet," he said.

In the northern part of the county, Witt said RiverStreet Networks is working diligently there and in the Phenix area.

"I received an email that they are ready to start hooking up customers," he said.

They have a three-year window within which they're supposed to complete that project.

"They're supposed to be completed with broadband in late spring, early summer of 2025," he said.

After identifying some holes in the county's broadband grant application, Witt said they've applied for another grant to reach people who wouldn't be served by what is underway.

He said they hope the county will have universal broadband in place by 2026.

"That's a big thing," Witt said, noting that for people who work at home and for students.

For people moving to the county, there are many who work from home but realize that they could only live in areas around towns that have high-speed internet.

"It'll provide a great opportunity for learning for our kids who need to do homework and things like that to have access to online resources," Witt said. "Broadband is huge."

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PRINCE EDWARD COUNTY

A look at Prince Edward's Heartland Innovative Technology Park that has started to develop over the last year. More progress is on schedule for 2024.



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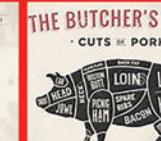
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they were hiding in a closet.”
 When the house is full of smoke, Stanley said firefighters can’t see everything. “So the equipment like this I’ll say it’s crucial to being able to do your job and protect our citizens.”

The county also purchased four new sheriff’s department cruisers last year.

On the public education front, Stanley said the board of supervisors and school board reached agreement on renovation of the Prince Edward County Elementary School.

“It’s estimated to be a \$43-plus million dollar project,” he said. “An architect has been identified, the contract with the architect has been signed and the school board is moving forward with that.”

Stanley said this project has been

talked about for a number of years to address problems such as the leaky roof.

“I think, you know, everybody across the board is excited that it’s going to move forward,” he added.

WHERE DID THE FUNDING COME FROM?

In preparation for the interview, Stanley prepared a list of the county administration’s accomplishment for 2023.

Grants are a key area with 11 awarded to Prince Edward County totaling \$1,494,578 during 2023.

These include:

- \$89,000 grant from Governor’s Agriculture and Forestry Industries Development Fund to replace steam pipes and other equipment
- \$28,184 from the Library of



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- \$414,030 from ARPA for purchase of four vehicles, 18 radio repeaters and two ballistic shields
- \$162,585 assistance for a Firefighters Grant to purchase two or three thermal imaging cameras for each of the county's fire departments
- \$684,718 from the Department of Criminal Justice Services for local probation and pretrial services
- \$20,000 from AFID for the county's economic strategic plan development
- \$10,000 from VTC Microbusiness Marketing Leverage Program for Forever Starts in Prince Edward County

- \$14,767 for litter prevention grant from DEQ
- \$50,000 from the Opioid Abatement Authority
- \$10,000 from marketing grant from Virginia 250

In addition, the county applied for a \$5 million grant from the Virginia Department of Health for the Sandy River Project.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Among the highlights on the planning and community development front, the county took steps to begin the update of its comprehensive plan and restructured the county planning commission and received the water withdrawal permit from DEQ for the Sandy River Reservoir.

Other achievements included on a list of accomplishments prepared by Stanley include:

- Approval of the siting agreement for Prince Edward Solar LLC's

proposed five megawatt solar energy facility at Pamplin.

- Approval of agreements for Elam Road Solar LLC's proposed three megawatt community solar facility at Pamplin.
- Support with \$100,000 of American Rescue Plan funds for STEPS Supportive Housing Project.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT

Some highlights from capital improvements on county administration's accomplishments list include:

- Completed upgrades to the cannery
- Courthouse improvements including repairs, painting and

replacing the air handler and fire doors

- Completed industrial access road to Prince Edward Business Park
- Completed the Rice convenience site
- Conducted repairs at the Sandy River Dam riser and emergency spillway

To see a full list of the county administration's accomplishments during 2023, Stanley encouraged residents to visit bit.ly/3HqDXO9. The four-page document includes a number of other board of supervisors actions through the year and additional items listed by month.



A look at some of the completed improvements to the Rice convenience site.



The Sandy River Reservoir is also used by many area fisherman to enjoy a day of fishing.



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Work continues to bring broadband internet to all of Buckingham County

County focuses on broadband

BY BRIAN CARLTON

BUCKINGHAM

They see it as a gamechanger. That’s the exact words each official from Buckingham County that we talked to used when referring to their broadband projects. When it comes to making progress, for Buckingham that comes dressed in the form of wires and pipes, a way to connect the county and also recruit businesses.

There are two projects currently going on in Buckingham to make that happen. The first is a joint effort between Firefly Fiber Broadband and the Central Virginia Electric Cooperative (CVEC). The second is a similar effort with Dominion Energy. What Dominion is doing, and is nearly finished with, is a project to build “middle mile” connections, a fiber optic cable that acts almost like a backbone. Domin-

ion runs a line into rural areas and then the partner builds the “last mile” connections, reaching nearby homes. Between the two projects, the goal right now is for everything to be finished by the end of 2025.

“Those two projects are going to revolutionize connectivity in Buckingham County,” said former Board of Supervisors member Jordan Miles. “The investments the board of supervisors made with broadband, that touches everybody.”

Miles and others see it as a critical step for the county. Now, residents who work remotely might give Buckingham a second look for a home. Now, doctors will be able to do remote visits, checking in with their patients who can’t make it out for a physical appointment because of weather. It also makes things



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A SWITCH TO SOLAR

Now the second part of Buckingham's progress this year is a bit controversial. County staff and some lawmakers, both past and current, themselves point to solar. Specifically, they point to both the number of projects approved and the ordinance put in place.

"Facilitating a friendly environment for renewables and mainly solar," Miles said, when asked what one of the biggest things this past board achieved.

Currently, Buckingham has three solar facilities approved and another one being considered, with the current approved total acreage projects at 3,553 acres. The ordinance caps the acreage at 7,500 in the county. Small solar projects are also allowed, up to a point. For small solar projects of 5 megawatts or less, they can have up to a combined 100 megawatts worth.

But solar has been a controversial topic in Buckingham this past year. While officials point to it as a viable alternative energy source, some residents aren't as supportive. Every meeting where a solar project has been discussed has featured the

community surrounding it in opposition, concerned about everything from erosion control to how it would look in or near neighborhoods.

But long-term, Buckingham officials feel the progress made with solar will help the county both generate revenue and bring more residents.

SOME CHANGES IN COMMUNITY

But beyond new programs and projects, some simple decisions have made things better in Buckingham. One that Buckingham County Administrator Karl Carter singled out was when the county took over the emergency medical services.

"We've grown it, expanding operations," Carter said. "We have three stations now to cover the county. People are getting far better service and it's cutting down on response times."

Carter is referring to the expansion of the Arvonias Volunteer Fire Department. As part of the expansion, the department agreed to create space to house the county's emergency medical services. The partnership will place BCDES's 12-hour unit at the Arvonias Volunteer Fire Department. This means that the location will have an ambulance there all the time, staffing it from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday.

The county has also taken a piece of property in Dillwyn and turned it into a community outlet.

We're referring to the property at 284 Industrial Park Road in Dillwyn. After some renovation, kids play soccer there, while parents walk for exercise or watch younger siblings play on the playground. It gives families in that part of the county somewhere to hold everything from reunions to birthday parties. Or just simply take a break after work and go walking. One of their current projects is to add restroom facilities, as currently there are just port-a-potties on site.

As for the future, Carter said Buckingham doesn't have any other specific economic development projects, but they're "continuously looking" for ways to improve and grow.





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SAVINGS

A small town with a lot going on

BY BRIAN CARLTON

CHARLOTTE COURT HOUSE

“A lot goes on in this small town of 500 people,” said Charlotte Court House Mayor David Watkins Jr.

For a place that houses the seat of Charlotte County, the county’s high school and middle school, along with a number of historical sites and an Amish cheese store, there’s a lot happening on any given day, Watkins points out. The only problem is not many people know about it. That’s one thing the town council and staff want to change in 2024, and part of the reason the council broke with tradition. Throughout the town’s more than 200 years of existence, it had just been a town clerk and the council itself in charge of the day to day activities. But in

order to help draw more attention to Charlotte Court House, the council went out and hired its first town manager.

“Previously, it had just been a town clerk and the town council and not everyone has a lot of time to spend on town happenings,” Watkins said. “And over the last few years especially, we have been finding out there are so many other duties involved with running a town than what a clerk handles. Now that’s our town manager’s job.”

He’s referring to Sara Crawford, who took the position in September. A native of Charlotte County and a graduate of Randolph-Henry High, Crawford moved over from the town



JOHN KARRATTI

Town council and staff want to draw history tourists to Charlotte Court House.



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treasurer's office, where she had spent the past seven years. And one of the things she's been working on is to let people know what's going on.

'A LOT OF HISTORY HERE'

"Charlotte Court House is a very unique little town. There's a lot of history here," Crawford said. She pointed out that Thomas Jefferson designed the courthouse, which is still standing. That courthouse was also a familiar location to Patrick Henry, who lived at nearby Red Hill and gave his final political speech here. There are artifacts to see, walking tours to take and a number of ways to engage with all of this history. But more often than not, the things Crawford and the council hear is that "oh, I didn't know any of this was here."

"I just think people are missing out," Crawford said. "We want to promote a little bit more, get the word out when we have events. Now we're not big enough to constantly hold events, but there are also some activities we want to do to invite people in."

And it's a history that dates back quite a ways, all the way to 1756. That's when the town was originally incorporated, labeled as 'The Magazine'. Three years later, it changed to Daltonsburgh, before switching to Marysville in 1836 and then it became Smithfield in 1874. Finally, the name Charlotte Court House came about in 1901. With the different names came different settlers, who left behind a number of sights.



JOHN KARRATTI

The story of Joseph Holmes is just one of several shared along the town's walking tour. Most of the properties are still in their original condition, with repairs done throughout the years.

"We want to promote our town as a place that people want to drive through or maybe stop by and have a walk through, just to see the sights," Watkins said. We want to promote our history here."

Crawford also hopes to do that through partnerships and cross-promotion. She points to places like the aforementioned Red Hill as a possibility.

"Red Hill is so close to us, there's a connection," Crawford said. "Beyond that, we have a walking history tour you can do."

Now the tour is currently self-guided, Crawford said, but she wants to change that in the future.

"My wish is to maybe have someone who can schedule tours and guide people through," Crawford said, "to be able to ask questions and get answers there on the spot."

LOOKING BEYOND HISTORY

And there's plenty of progress, both current and planned, to see all around the area. While Watkins mentioned being "a small town of 500 people," Charlotte Court House has actually climbed past that. As of the 2020 census, it stood at 756 residents, continuing 20 years of growth. In 2000, the population stood at 404, then jumped to 543 in 2010, a 34%

spike. By 2020, the numbers jumped again, this time by 39%. And when school is in session, the population nearly triples. What would it be like if some of those parents dropping off students, some of those teachers and other school staff decided to make Charlotte Court House their home? That growth, and the potential for more, brings with it a need for change. So that's what the town staff is doing. Another part of Crawford's job will be managing the new zoning ordinance, just recently put in place, Mayor Watkins said, to "help us take care of the town and keep it preserved."

Crawford also wants to continue making connections.

"It's my goal to form relationships with other towns, other organizations," she said. "We can learn from their experiences and they can learn from ours."





JOHN KARRATTI

Charlotte Court House is not just the county seat but houses both the middle and high school. Seen here is Randolph-Henry High, which on any given week is home to anything from basketball games to community celebrations.



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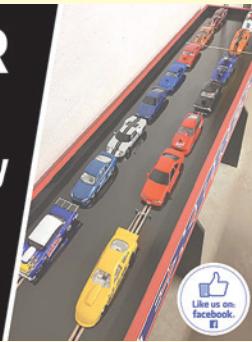
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'Everything's moving in the right direction'

BY JEFF MOORE

CUMBERLAND

Derek Stamey is excited about what the future holds for Cumberland County.

"I just think everything's moving in the right direction," said Stamey, who is just about to mark two years as Cumberland County's administrator.

In a Jan. 26 interview, he made it clear that accomplishments that have come during his tenure are due to the work of his team in the county administrator's office, the community and the elected officials who support them.

"You know, the last two years in Cumberland have been a whirlwind," he said.

As the county emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic, they have been able to hit the ground running with American Rescue Plan Act funds.

"One of the great things I hear in the community when I get stopped is people say, 'Hey, I can see a real difference. I can see a change,'" Stamey noted.

Among the progress he pointed to is paving and lighting the Luther P. Jackson Community Center parking lot, adding three new parks in the county and completing the addition to the Randolph District Volunteer Fire Department station. Stamey added that the county also has improved its fire and EMS capabilities, along

with preparing to implement a radio system.

"We were able to pay for that by restructuring the county debt and doing that at no additional cost to the taxpayer," he said.

Cumberland County's comprehensive plan also saw its first update in 10 years.

"There have been just a whirlwind of improvements as part of that comprehensive plan," Stamey said. "We adopted a public facility master plan for the next 25 years."

The county also now has a 25-year capital improvement plan.

He noted the county has been able to remain competitive with salaries for its deputies and with its support of the school system.

With these and many other accomplishments, Stamey knows there is more work ahead for Cumberland County.

One of the challenges ahead, he said, is finding ways to diversify the revenue streams that fund the county.

"We're a one legged stool, so to speak. We're so dependent on real estate and personal property tax," he said. "We've got work to take that tax burden off of our residents, while still meeting all of our state mandates, but also providing the services that are desired by the community."

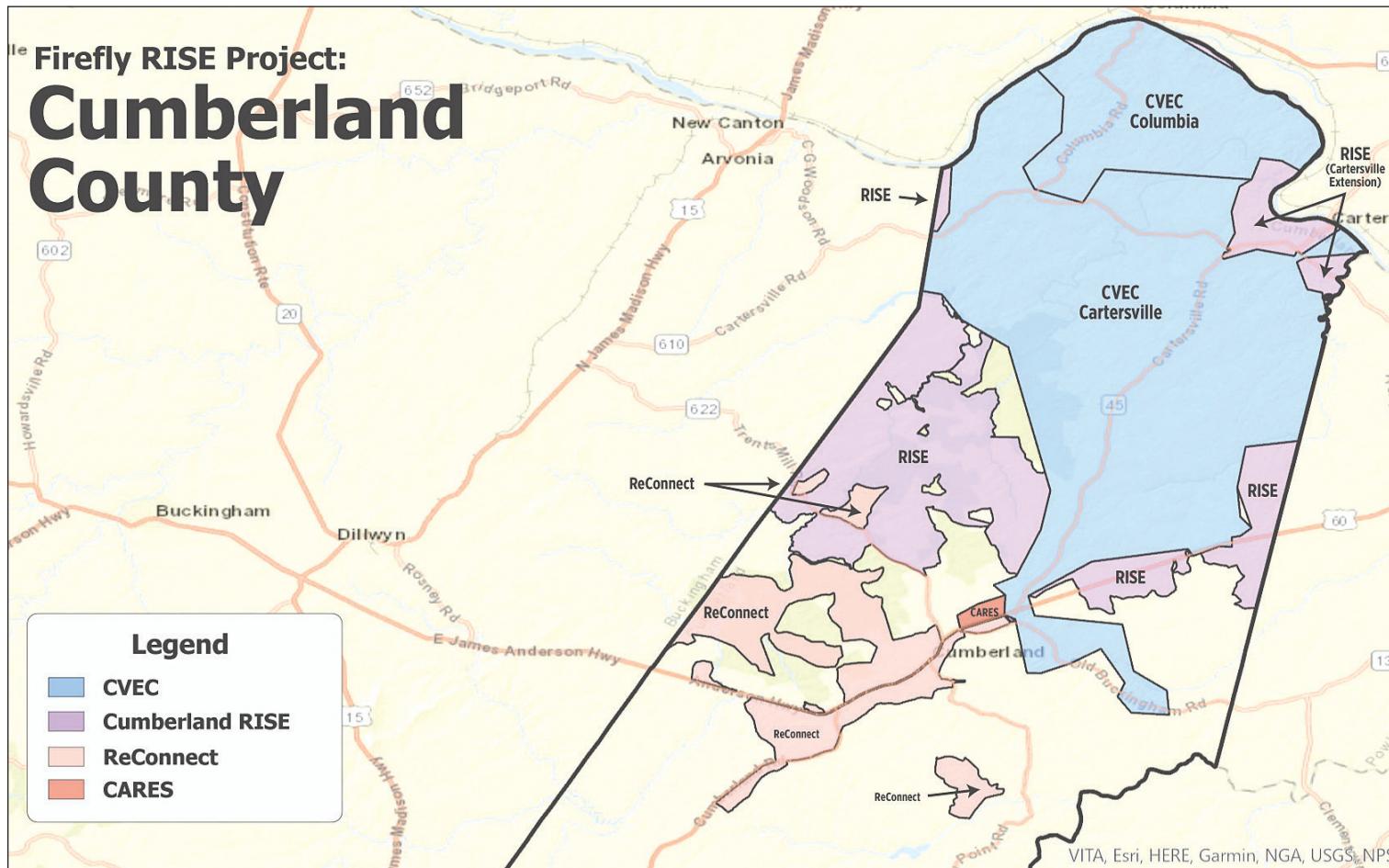
A BALANCING ACT

The county also has to balance this with the dichotomy of remaining rural.

"That's what our residents told us during the comprehensive plan process. They like the character of the county."

Over the next few years working with the new board of supervisors, one of their main focuses will be on building upon previous accomplishments and trying to bring a grocery store to the county. Working with the economic development authority, he said they will work to drive forth economic development initiatives that maintain the character of the county, but also diversify where the county gets its revenue to alleviate that tax burden on residents.

"The approach we



A look at progress on the Firefly Project, which is designed to fully cover Cumberland County with broadband internet.

took through the comprehensive plan process was identifying village concepts, focusing development in these areas,” Stamey said. “That way the county can remain 90% to 95% rural.”

He’s talking about a portion in the comprehensive plan that cites “village centers” to build on.

The village centers include the Randolph area, north of Randolph, the Cartersville area in the north of Cumberland, the Cobbs Creek Reservoir area also in the north, the identified “rural crossroads” areas throughout the County, and Cumberland’s namesake and central courthouse area. For example, the courthouse area is seen as a place to bring in new mixed use, commercial and residential growth, along with “amenity-filled public spaces for the community to gather.”

He added that when the county gets these certain nodes of development, it is where they can start to diversify their revenue streams by adding customers onto the existing



BRIAN CARLTON

Cumberland has officially rolled out its first three county parks. The third and final here is the Luther P. Jackson Park, named after a civil rights icon.

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water and sewer infrastructure.”

The county is also working to highlight its tourism related assets.

“We want folks to come into the county to stay for the day and spend their money,” he said, but then returning home or to a neighboring community.

“When you look at the assets the county has, we’ve got the James River, the Appomattox River, we’ve got state parks, state forests,” he said. “We have an array of outdoor recreational opportunities that will bring folks through the county.”

Stamey said Cumberland also is the northern gateway to Longwood and Hampton-Sydney.

“Folks are going to be driving through here,” he said. “We need to work to get to the exposure of what value Cumberland has for staycations and things of that nature. So the folks can come in, spend their money, diversify those revenue streams and then go home.”

THE PATH TO CUMBERLAND COUNTY

It was fate that led Stamey to an internship with Henrico County government while in college at Virginia Commonwealth University. It was the first step in his career path in public service.

As he pursued his college education, he knew he wanted to do something that positively affected people. But he didn’t want to be a lawyer or a doctor.

“I was fortunate enough to get connected with some folks in Henrico County and I actually performed an internship with Henrico County

and that’s really what spurred it,” Stamey said. “I’ve worked in the private sector for a little while and then I was hired by Henrico and the rest as they say is history.”

Working in local government was a perfect fit for him.

“When you enjoy what you’re doing, you don’t work a day in your life,” he noted.

Working in the public sector can have its rewards and challenges, but Stamey chooses to stay focused on the positive.

“If you focus on the negative, you’re never going to get anywhere,” he said. “I think as long as you stay positive you come to work every day and you’re focused on serving the public to the best of your ability.”

Stamey stressed the importance of remembering in a job like his that he is there to serve others, while knowing you have done everything ethically and have given it your best from a management standpoint.

“I don’t think you can lose,” he said. “I think you have to have thick skin and you have to understand that you’re not going to make everybody happy.”

But it’s also important to be accessible to those who are not happy with something.

“Just because someone disagrees with you, that doesn’t mean that you have to be dismissive or negative towards it,” he said, noting that people want to be heard. “I welcome someone with a different opinion because everybody brings their own perspective and everybody brings

a different background to the table and you have to be willing to listen.”

Additionally, Stamey said it’s OK to admit that a change of course is needed because listening to others can bring a different perspective from someone with a different background.

“I think at the end of the day, they still may walk away, not liking it, but at least they respect you,” he said.

Stamey believes his career path that started in parks and recreation instead of coming from planning and zoning or finance has helped him be uniquely prepared for his role as county administrator.

“I think it uniquely prepares you for it because number one, you get the smallest piece of the pie to work with,” he said. “So you’re always trying to figure out how to stretch a dollar and how to maximize dollars to provide a quality service.”

Additionally, he noted that working in parks and recreation teaches one to always be accessible to people.

“It’s a people job,” Stamey said. “It uniquely prepares you to be able to solve problems and to work with people in the community.”

For Stamey, he wants people to know he doesn’t come into a situation with preconceived notions, noting that people often think that’s the case because a person has “all those papers on the wall.”

“I grew up in a rural locality and I know what it’s like to grow up in that kind of environment,” he said. “I’ve been through some tough times too and I’m human just like everybody

else. And most importantly, I’m willing to meet with anybody and listen to anybody’s perspective.”

He said residents should not think that his door is ever closed.

“It’s always open and I’m always accessible,” Stamey said. “I’m always doing my best to meet folks where they are and to serve the community’s best interest.”

Serving as county administrator is a 24/7 job, but when not on the job Stamey’s main focus is spending time with his family.

“Work-life balance is very important,” he said. My focus when I’m not here is I try to spend every moment that I have with my kids.”

He has three children, two girls and a boy who are ages 17, 15 and 12. He has been married to his wife now for 22 years.

“I take a similar approach with my family as I do with the work,” Stamey said. “It’s not about me, it’s about them.”

He coaches his son’s and his daughter’s basketball teams. He’s helping his oldest prepare for graduation this year as she prepares to head to the University of Virginia in the fall.

“It’s all about spending time with them and allowing them to enjoy what they like to do with me and their mother and their siblings,” he said, along with serving their church family.

Stamey also enjoys the outdoors.

“I’m a beach person. I’m a river person. And I’m a mountain person,” he noted. “Anytime I can get away to those three spots, I’ll take it.”



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Progress takes time, staff say

BY BRIAN CARLTON

HAMPDEN-SYDNEY

Progress takes time. Work started two, three or even five years ago may not be finished yet. In celebrating the work the college has done over the last year, that's also something Hampden-Sydney College President Larry Stimpert wants to get across: you have to be patient. That's been true of everything on campus from the new science center to the college's athletic teams. Because of the work already done and things getting started now, Stimpert said it's an exciting time in Hampden-Sydney's history.

"We are vigorously pursuing our overarching goal of seeing Hampden-Sydney take its rightful place among the nation's finest colleges," Stimpert said. "We have doubled-down on the College's dis-

tinctive mission 'to form good men and good citizens,' a mission that remains as important and urgent as ever."

And the college has done that in a number of ways. First, we mentioned a science center a bit earlier. That would be the Pauley Science Center at Hampden-Sydney, which includes state-of-the-art classrooms, laboratories, equipment and interactive spaces to help support tomorrow's scientists. This would be a prime example of how progress takes time. The \$30 million gift that helped fund the center was given by The Pauley Family Foundation back in 2019. Work on the center continued until it was dedicated and opened for classes at the beginning of 2023. Four years of effort, time and patience helped launch a major



HAMPDEN-SYDNEY COLLEGE

The Tigers have been No. 1 in the nation for the last five weeks, the longest stretch in their history.



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Beyond Pauley, the college has been undergoing quite a bit of construction, addressing what Stimpert called longstanding facilities needs, in order to prepare for the future. That includes a complete renovation and expansion of the residence halls on campus, which is currently taking place. And work has been done on Kirby Field House, which the No. 1 team in the nation for Division III, the Hampden-Sydney Tigers basketball team, calls home. But we'll touch on them a bit more later.

LOOKING FORWARD AND BACK

The college has also tapped into its history to help shape the path forward. Hampden-Sydney is one of the oldest colleges in the United States, having remained in operation since Nov. 10, 1775. The 1,300-acre campus has been designated as a National Historic Preservation Zone and is now part of both the Road to Revolution Heritage Trail and the Civil Rights in Education Trail, giving people beyond just the students a look at the



HAMPDEN-SYDNEY COLLEGE

A look inside the new Pauley Science Center on the campus of Hampden-Sydney College. The doors opened just a year ago.

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HAMPDEN-SYDNEY COLLEGE

More sights from the inside of Pauley Science Center, part of the growth at Hampden-Sydney.

past. Now that they're established, the historic designation and multiple trails highlight folks like the college's charter trustees, Patrick Henry and James Madison. It also points out one of the first graduates of Hampden-Sydney, a young man named William Henry Harrison, the ninth President of the United States.

The school's history also highlights how expansion has taken place through the years and continues, even today. Those first few decades, the school sat on 100 acres of property in Prince Edward County. Now it's up to 1,300 acres. The college also started with less than 500 students. Now it's up to more than 1,000 and is starting to

stretch beyond the Heart of Virginia for its recruiting.

"We are optimistic that the admissions and recruiting strategy of selectivity and greater geographic expansion is starting to bear fruit and that we will soon not only be recruiting the young men we want, but recruiting them in sufficient numbers to reach our enrollment goal of 1,200 students," Stimpert said.

That's the progress Hampden-Sydney is aiming for in the near future. Currently, 1,100 students call the place home. The goal is within the next five years to increase that to 1,200.

We've mentioned the physical

expansion and a focus on history, but there's also been growth this year on what classes are offered at the college. As it stands, there are 27 majors and 26 minors at Hampden-Sydney, now stretching to include things like mathematical economics and leadership in the public interest. Students interested in using that new Pauley Science Center will be able to do so in everything from microbiology to biochemistry.

A GROWING SPORTS PRESENCE

And finally there's growth across the sports fields at Hampden-Sydney. In football, the Tigers have just hired a new coach, just the 29th in school history. Vince Luvara takes the place of Marty Favret, who retired at the end of this latest season, his 24th with the Tigers. Favret retired with a number of achievements. He stands as the all-time winningest coach in program history at 151-90. During his time at Hampden-Sydney, the Tigers had 16 winning seasons, with five Old Dominion Athletic Conference (ODAC) championships and six appearances in the NCAA Division III Football Championship. He also retired

as the longest-tenured collegiate football head coach in the Commonwealth.

In his place steps Luvara, who has been the defensive coordinator at Washington & Jefferson (PA) College since 2016. The Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania native is no stranger to Division III football, having played four years at Allegheny (PA) College, coached one year at Allegheny and two years at Misericordia (PA) University.

And then there's change on the basketball court as well. The part about progress taking time is highlighted with the growth head coach Caleb Kimbrough has sparked with the Tigers. The year before he arrived, the team won less than 10 games. Now they're 19-2, on the verge of their second NCAA Tournament appearance in two years and have been the No. 1 team in the nation for almost a full month.

And that's what Stimpert hopes people see, that while growth isn't always immediate, it constantly happens at Hampden-Sydney. One of the nation's oldest colleges is also one that's constantly changing and moving forward.





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