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## Planning Commission recommends denial of zoning changes

BY KATIE NORTHCOTT

Changes in data center zoning took center stage at the Loudoun County Planning Commission's Dec. 12 public hearing and work session.

The Loudoun County Board of Supervisors began discussions about changing data center zoning ordinances in the spring of 2022. At its Feb. 6, 2024, business meeting, the Board approved the project plan for a joint Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPAM) and Zoning Ordinance Amendment (ZOAM). The project plan split the project into two phases. The Data Center Standards and Locations CPAM and ZOAM, which was discussed at the Commission's Dec. 12 meeting, is part of phase one of the plan.

The amendments would make it more difficult for developers to obtain approval for new data centers. Data centers would be designated as a conditional use in three place types where they are currently

a core use and as a special exception use in three place types where they are currently a permitted use by-right.

At a Planning Commission public hearing on Sept. 24, commissioners heard 27 public speakers. According to a planning and zoning staff memorandum, some speakers supported the amendments while others expressed opposition.

Those opposed cited concerns "that adoption could negatively affect existing and pipeline data centers, hinder data center campus expansions, create uncertainty within the development industry, and drive data center projects to other jurisdictions."

"Business investment is the foundation of Loudoun's thriving economy, and data centers have been pivotal to this success" said Matt Leslie, Senior Planning and Development Manager at Bowman Consulting. "The amendments before you tonight will not only impact the data

center industry but will also reverberate across all sectors of Loudoun's industry."

Those in favor expressed sentiments that "the amendments would help the County address resident concerns on the impact of data centers on residential neighborhoods."

"I don't see data centers as the harmless and risk-free money tree that some people seem to suggest that they are," Loudoun resident and climate advocate Chris Tandy said. "Data centers are gobbling up huge amounts of land and going into places where people don't want them, like near residential areas, near malls, along Route 7, and I even saw one application that would be near the metro station."

After discussions with Supervisor Michael Turner (D-Ashburn), Executive Director of the Department of Economic Development Buddy Rizer, the county attorney's office, and planning and

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zoning staff, the Commission decided, on Dec. 12, to recommend denial of the proposed amendments. In the resolution, the Commission explained that its denial is due to the limited scope of the Board's direction and sent its resolution of denial with six recommendations for the Board's consideration.

"I think having some substance as to why we're not approving what they wanted is a better way of communicating to [the Board]," Commissioner Dale Polen

CONTINUED ON PAGE 23 »

## "Let's keep Virginia winning" — Gov. Youngkin proposes amendments to 2024-2026 budget

BY SOPHIA CLIFTON

On Dec. 18, 2024, Gov. Glenn Youngkin addressed the General Assembly's Joint Money Committee to present his proposed amendments to the 2024-2026 biennial budget bill.

"Virginia is roaring. Our collective bold actions are working," Youngkin began. "And as a result of our work together, Virginia is growing, Virginia is leading, and Virginia is winning."

"Let's keep going. Let's keep Virginia winning," Youngkin said, reminding the committee how far the state has come. "When we started all of this in 2021, Virginia was bottom third in the nation in job growth. More businesses were leaving than coming. Over 23,000 small businesses were shuttered in 2021.

"Today, everything is different. This year, Virginia was named the Top State in America for Business by CNBC, and just this week, we were named by Business Facilities

state of the year, the best place to locate a business.

Businesses have committed nearly \$90 billion in capital to build factories, expand facilities, develop supply chains," Youngkin said. "And last year, for the first time in 10 years, we saw more people move to the Commonwealth than away from the Commonwealth to the other 49 states. Together, we can all be proud that Virginia is a place where people want to live and work and raise a family."

"I'm presenting this morning a reforecast for 2025 and 2026 that incorporates \$3.2 billion of incremental revenue over the biennium ... This new December forecast reflects a 4.1% growth over 2024, followed by a 2.5% growth in 2026. This 4.1% growth rate compares to the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22 »

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# Lucketts Ruritan Club Awards Citizen of the Year to Chapple

Mike Dunn, President of the Lucketts Ruritan Club, awarded Holly Heider Chapple, owner of Hope's Flower Farm on Stumptown Road, the Club's Citizen of the Year at the organization's Annual Awards Dinner. The event was held on Tuesday, Dec. 10, at Raspberry Falls Golf and Hunt Club in Leesburg.

The Citizen of the Year award is given to an individual in Lucketts who has demonstrated exceptional citizenship and commitment to the community. "Holly has made her farm on Stumptown Road a destination not only for her customers, but for the community as well," said Dunn when presenting the award.

"Hope's Flower Farm is much more than a winery, gift shop, and flower business; it is a resource for organizations that work to support the needs of the local community," Dunn said.

Chapple is a native of Loudoun where she grew up on her parents 100-acre farm in Lovettsville. She has a career in floral design and is a renowned educator in the floral industry. With her late husband, Evan, Holly purchased the 25-acre Hope Flower Farm property on Stumptown Road in 2015. Together they had a shared

vision for making it a floral business and an event destination.

Since his passing it has become not only a place for celebrations, but also for healing. Bringing the beauty and power of flowers into people's everyday life is Chapple's mission.



This has inspired her to share the beauty and serenity of her property with organizations that support the healing needs of individuals, families, and communities. "Here at Hope Flower Farm, we truly just want to use flowers to help nurture, inspire, and keep people moving forward," said Chapple. To learn more about Hope Flower Farm & Winery visit their website at [www.hopeflowerfarm.com](http://www.hopeflowerfarm.com).

## NoVa hero receives free roof from Pond Roofing & Exteriors

To mark its 60th anniversary, Pond Roofing & Exteriors has provided a new roof free of charge to Mrs. Tilton, a well-loved and deserving member of the community. Known as the "neighborhood mom," Mrs. Tilton has spent years opening her home to local children, offering them a safe and supportive environment.

A retired school bus driver and cancer survivor, Mrs. Tilton has touched many lives with her kindness and resilience. Despite her efforts, recent challenges made it difficult for her to maintain her home, leaving her in need of assistance. Recognizing her contributions and current circumstances, Pond Roofing chose her as the 2024 roof giveaway recipient.



"Mrs. Tilton has given so much to others, and we're honored to support her now when she needs it most," said Patrick Readyhough, President, Pond Roofing & Exteriors.

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# A Traffic Circle in France

BY CHARLES HOUSTON

Years ago, I was driving a rental car near Nice, when I came upon something I'd never seen: A floral traffic circle. Not a plain, generic traffic circle, but an over-the-top extravagance filled with thousands of flowers all abloom. It made me smile. Later it made me think, and I came up with a truth: A government will do anything and every thing if it can impose taxes to pay for it—or if it can borrow the money.

That's not a good thing, and I mused over the proper scope of government.

## Back in Georgia

Counties in my home state are governed by County Commissions composed of County Commissioners. That's the same-same as Virginia's Supervisors. These bodies were first created in the 1890's and were called Commissions of Roads and Revenues.

By World War II the name had changed to County Commission. I, though, like to go back to "Roads and Revenues" and think about the necessary core functions for a local government. Here are some:

Public order (courts, policing, jails,) land records, managing land use via zoning, some aspects of public health, roads and bridges, probate, elections, taxation.

## Outside the Box

You might think that I'm delusional, but consider government activities that might be privatized and you come up with a lengthy list: Parks, water and sewer, libraries, the dog pound, and to an extent, schools. Even some of government's core functions could be managed by others—maintaining land records is an example.

Perhaps you assert that the government can do all such things itself, at a cheaper and more efficient manner than the private sector. Anybody who've had any contact with government at any level knows that's not reality. Most governments, at any level, epitomize inefficiency.

On the other hand, most governments have good intentions and mean well. Nevertheless, the study of organizational theory (a Master's-Level course) concludes that an organization's prime directives become permanence, power and growth. A very readable and short primer about this is "Up the Organization," by former Avis CEO Robert Townsend.

## Metrics

One primary measure that may indicate government bloat: County spending per capita. With this data, I compared Loudoun to two suburban counties (Fairfax and Prince William) and to three rural counties (Clarke, Fauquier, and Frederick.)

A disclaimer: I used Google to get all the numbers and I won't vouch for complete accuracy. I also lack the meticulous detail of accountants. Be that as it may, here's what I see.

## County Spending

The three rural counties spend an average of \$4,500 per capita. Fairfax

and PW, the other suburban counties, spend an average of \$9,100 per capita. This rural vs suburban comparison is meaningful, but I'll leave that for another day.

But what of Loudoun? Our county spends \$15,700 per capita, 70% more than the comparable suburban counties. Alarm bells ring. People gasp. Why such profligacy?

In very general terms, I posit that Loudoun government simply does too many things. We are burdened by a government that provides many luxuries. Perhaps "nonessentials" is a less-fraught term.

## A Luxury-Non-essential in the Making

The County is now exploring the idea of it's creating an Arts Center. It would house visual art, which I love, and performing arts, which I loathe. I should explain that last comment.

My mother was deeply involved with theater and opera. When a play's cast included a youngster, I was usually tapped for the role. That was a kick, but it did not inculcate me with a love of theater. Quite the opposite, actually. Actors in a live performance must project their voices to reach the back of the house and overly emote. I didn't—and don't—like this at all; it just feels fake.

Opera seems to be a play with a soundtrack, and with even more vocal projection and excessive emoting.

Thus, the performing art portion of a new arts center is wasted on me. Not so the idea of a place for visual art; I'd love a place like that (think of Alexandria's Torpedo Factory) but I believe there's a private sector approach that's better and cheaper.

## A Place for Visual Art

For the most part, that means painting, sculpture and video. Let's think big—there are some noted art colonies that are home to serious artists and art students. Some benefits of an art colony are art galleries, art in public spaces,

art-oriented restaurants, nightlife and an enhanced public image. Some examples: Santa Fe. Black Mountain in North Carolina. Provincetown on Cape Cod.

Putting Loudoun in that league would be a tall order, but we can try. Our rural countryside is a perfect venue. To start, find an established artist who's also a teacher, and make that person a great offer: A free place to live, a private studio and spaces for their art students. Many farms, especially in the southern part of the county, have guest cottages and barns that could be modified for art use. Surely there are people here who have such places, love art and are willing to create the locus for an art center. Ego can be a motivator, as with the Houston-Picasso Art School.

In addition to finding a place, there'd be a lot of work to find the right artist, who'd be the bell cow. Start by asking Yale's art department for suggestions. (Yale has one of the premier art departments.) Many ideas come to mind: Start with a summer program. Affiliate with a university. Form a new non-profit to do all these things.

## An Unrelated Observation

There was recent bragging that our breweries and wineries put \$43 million into Loudoun's economy. Total income in the County is around \$44.6 billion, so the powerful beverage industry generates less than one-tenth of one percent of that. Its economic impact is de minimis, but it produces an overwhelming number of complaints from residents. These places should be more strictly reviewed by the Board by requiring Special Exceptions for any new ones.

*Charles Houston is a retired office building developer who moved from Atlanta to Paeonian Springs thirty years ago. He often uses the double traffic circles at the Route 7/Route 9 intersection. He has been deeply involved in art for many years and in many capacities.*

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Please include your name, address and phone number.  
We reserve the right to edit submissions as necessary.  
Deadline for print edition is the third week  
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## Let's keep girls' sports for biological girls

Dear Editor:

Boys should never be permitted to participate on a girl's athletic team. Everyone knows that transgender girls are infiltrating girls' sports. It is no longer fair, fun nor safe for the real girls.

It is not safe for two reasons. First—there is a greater risk of injury from competing with a bigger faster stronger male. Second—there is risk of voyeurism

and sexual adventure from that same male.

It's not fun when girls have to worry about being injured or molested. It is not fun when a girl has to hide from the spying eyes of a boy in the bathroom or locker room. It is not fun when it is no longer fair. A boy on a girls' team is just not fair.

Transgender girls are bigger, stronger, faster, and inherently more aggressive

than girls. Please do not allow transgender girls to infiltrate and ruin girls' sports. It is incredible how successful girls' sports have become over the years.

Let's keep the boys away from girls' sports. If this trend of boys playing on girl's teams continues all the achievements and accomplishments of girls' amateur and professional sports will be lost.

*Damon Cable  
Purcellville*

# Nett stands firm to his campaign promise to 'Never Surrender to Bullies'

BY VALERIE CURY

Council Member Ben Nett took office on Jan. 1. Prior to his taking office and after being elected to Town Council, he faced an ultimatum that could have forced him to choose between his role as a town police officer and his elected position on the Town Council. The deadline given to him by senior management, was Dec. 3. Nett, true to one of his campaign slogans, 'Never Surrender to Bullies,' chose neither to bow to pressure

nor to abandon his commitment to his community. He chose to stand his ground.

Nett's refusal to resign from either post is not only a testament to his resolve, it is also entirely legal. The Virginia Conflict of Interest and Ethics Advisory Council has upheld his right to run for, and serve on, the Town Council while maintaining his position with the Purcellville Police Department. Under Virginia Code 15.2-1512.2, First Responders are empowered to engage in political activity without being forced to

sacrifice their livelihoods or careers in public service.

The backdrop for this was a new policy, inserted within the July 2024 update to the Town of Purcellville Employee Handbook, which suddenly demanded that no town employee could continue in their position if elected to public office.

Based on the revised Purcellville Employee Handbook, Section 10.3.B.1, "No employee shall continue in their position with the Town after election to any public office in the Town."

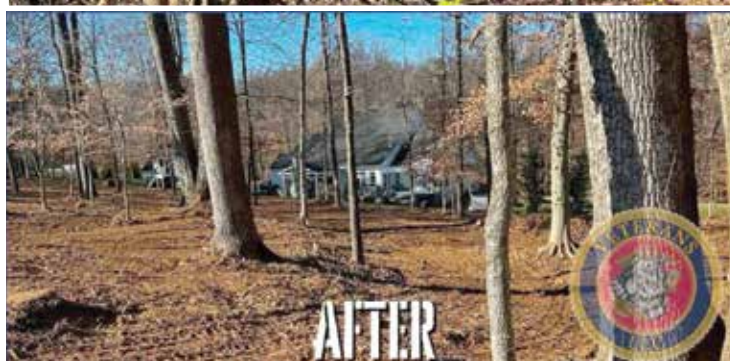
This newly created policy was inserted into the July 2024 revision of the handbook, which had not been updated since 2005—nearly two decades. Prior to this revision, no reference to the new policy existed in the handbook and appeared to apply directly to Nett. By the

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## Purcellville's newly elected Mayor and Council Members take their seats

On Dec. 5 the newly elected Mayor and Council Members were sworn in by Clerk of the Circuit Court, Gary M. Clemens, to their new seats which took effect Jan. 1. Pictured is Mayor Chris Bertaut with his sons Carl "Ashu" Bertaut-Strange and James Bertaut-Strange. Council Members Ben Nett, Susan Khalil, Caleb Stought and Kevin Wright.



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# BOS approves strategic focus areas, initiatives, vision statement

The Loudoun County Board of Supervisors has approved the strategic focus areas and initiatives that the Board will focus on during its current term, which ends in December 2027. In addition, the Board has approved an updated vision statement for Loudoun County.

Every four years when a new Board takes office, the Board of Supervisors identifies key focus areas for their term that result in various actions steps for county staff to help accomplish the Board's goals through a strategic workplan. The updated strategic focus areas were informed by the Board's strategic planning retreat in June 2024, and approved during the Dec. 3 Board of Supervisors meeting. The Board approved six strategic focus areas for the 2024-2027 term.

## GOVERNMENT

### Uplifting Loudoun Businesses and Promoting New Economic Development

Loudoun is home to the largest concentration of data centers in the world, which provides tax revenue to the county and helps to keep homeowners' real property tax rate low. The Board recognizes that the county should continue to focus on strengthening existing businesses while also identifying and harnessing

opportunities to diversify the economy. The Board acknowledged that the county should focus on attracting new industries that will ensure the county's financial health.

### Meeting Loudoun County's Diverse Housing Needs

The demand for housing across all income brackets remains high with particular needs for attainable housing for those earning zero percent to 60% of the Area Median Income, particularly those earning zero percent to 30% of AMI. The Board acknowledged that the county's housing plan in the Loudoun County 2019 Comprehensive Plan needs to be updated to answer key questions regarding the promotion of innovative and accessible housing, including multi-modal, walkable communities tied to transportation links, and how to reconcile housing needs with the goal of preserving the open spaces of Western Loudoun.

### Preserving Open Space and the Environment

Two-thirds of Loudoun County is rural with a strong agricultural economy. As the potential for development in the county continues, the Board prioritized the need to permanently preserve open spaces in western Loudoun to safeguard

the county's unique characteristics and its rural tourism industries. Concurrently, the Board indicated the need to also prioritize needs for more community, neighborhood and district parks for residents throughout the county. The county will focus on identifying and leveraging all available strategies to help achieve this strategic priority.

### Improving Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging

The county seeks—and has made strides—to ensure Loudoun is a welcoming place for all. The Board expressed a desire to continue the county's work in this strategic focus area by identifying new ways of engaging communities to understand their needs and challenges and to assure everyone feels they have an opportunity for their voice to be heard. The Board previously established an Office of Equity and Inclusion and has had initial discussions regarding the potential of establishing a Human Rights Commission.

### Connecting Loudoun

The Board intends to continue its strategic focus on connecting Loudoun through the completion of significant transportation projects that are already underway.

Additionally, the Board acknowledged the potential benefits resulting from the reorganizing the county's transportation projects. This focus area is also intended to continually improve the county's bus services by focusing on high-traffic, lower-income areas and consideration of an on-demand bus program. Consideration of improvements along Rt. 50 could help secure federal and state support for transportation projects and modes that support agritourism.

Community Programs and Services  
The Board's strategic focus areas include continuing to explore the best ways to assess the needs of the community and how to enhance existing programs and services as well as to develop new programs and services that address the community's needs. This strategic focus area may include a broad range of activities, such as improving the county's delivery of services in the county where needs exist, which may require the strategic location of the county's service centers. Additionally, the Board discussed improving community members' ability to access programs and services by addressing barriers, such as cost and any impediments for people with disabilities. The Board also indicated an interest in

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# Senate passes Gabriella Miller Kids First Research Act 2.0

On Dec. 20, Congresswoman Jennifer Wexton (D-VA-10) and Senators Tim Kaine and Mark R. Warner (both D-VA) celebrated the Senate passage of their bipartisan Gabriella Miller Kids First Research

**GOVERNMENT**

Act 2.0. The bill has been a top priority of Wexton's since

she first came into Congress. The bill now heads to President Biden's desk to be signed into law.

The bill reauthorizes federal funding for the National Institute of Health's Gabriella Miller Kids First Pediatric Research Program (Kids First), which the senators helped create to support lifesaving research of treatments and cures for childhood cancer since 2015.

The legislation is named in honor of Gabriella Miller, who lived in Virginia's 10th District and was diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumor and passed away in 2013 at the age of 10. Her passionate advocacy for lawmakers to "stop talking, start doing" led to the passage of the Gabriella Miller Kids First Research

Act and creation of Ten-Year Pediatric Research Initiative Fund in 2014.

"For as long as I have been serving in Congress, I've been fighting to pass the Gabriella Miller Kids First Research Act 2.0 and extend critical funding for childhood cancer research," said Wexton.

"I'm so proud that we've finally gotten this lifesaving bill through Congress and on its way to be signed into law. This bipartisan bill will build on the groundbreaking work of the Kids First program and deliver much-needed resources to better understand, treat, and hopefully one day cure childhood cancer. No family should have to face the fear and pain of their child's cancer diagnosis, and I'm grateful for the partnership of Senator Tim Kaine and the remarkable advocacy of Ellyn Miller and the Miller family in honor of Gabriella and her fight, to build support for this bill," she said.

"Gabriella Miller was a courageous Virginian who gave her all to advocating for those whose lives have been touched by childhood

cancer," said Kaine. "I'm honored to have worked with the Miller Family and Congresswoman Wexton on this bipartisan legislation to reauthorize a crucial pediatric cancer research program that was created in her honor. I'm glad the Senate passed it today and urge President Biden to sign it into law as quickly as possible."

"By reauthorizing the research program bearing Gabriella Miller's name, we are helping to honor her memory, giving hope to families facing devastating diagnoses, and ensuring that future generations have access to the life-saving treatments they deserve," said Warner.

In 2014, the Gabriella Miller Kids First Research Act, which the senators championed, was signed into law by President Obama, establishing the Ten-Year Pediatric Research Initiative Fund and authorizing \$12.6 million in annual funds for childhood disease research through Fiscal Year 2023.

Since then, Kids First has taken tremendous steps towards

understanding childhood cancer, such as establishing the Gabriella Kids Resource Center—a comprehensive data resource for research and patient communities meant to advance discoveries. The language included in the bill reauthorizes the Kids First program for five years.

Cancer continues to kill more children in the United States than any other disease. Over 15,000 children a year are diagnosed with cancer, with that number tragically having gradually risen in recent decades.

Pediatric cancers often differ from adults in the type, how they spread, and how it is treated, and many children do not respond well to conventional adult treatments, which frequently cause long term health issues and disabilities even in circumstances where the cancer is successfully cured. Yet while children face special hurdles when it comes to fighting cancer, less than 8% of current government funding for cancer is geared specifically towards developing treatments and cures for childhood cancer and other rare diseases.



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# Just Like Nothing (else) on Earth: Catoctin Skate Park

BY TIM JON

You can rest assured: you will never see me enjoying full use of this local facility, at least not in the present lifetime. Having been diagnosed with what appears, now, to be a lifelong case of vertigo, I became noticeably dizzy just navigating my way 'round the place, and taking a handful of pictures. Now, that



TIM JON

being said, I was at the same time lured into the beautiful geometry of the surfaces before me—quite unlike any other natural or man-made attraction in Loudoun County, Virginia.

The Skate Plaza at Catoctin Park originally opened in 1998, with a re-opening some 20 years down the line—in a new and improved condition.

The task of describing the formation of the dips, curves, humps and swirls offered to the would-be skaters would be more difficult, at least for me, than coming up with word-pictures to create an image of a Lockheed SR-71—the legendary Mach 3 reconnaissance plane from the 1960's. The Blackbird looks like a Salvador Dali-inspired icepick. I'm still working on a good verbal schematic of the local roller-skating facility.

I have no doubt that these two futuristic

artifacts—the plane and the park—require an incredibly high level of skill in the participant. I would also assume that the sensations of flight imparted by these two vastly different 'craft' are quite unlike anything else on (or off!) the earth.

Now I loved bicycle riding as a younger (and more levelheaded, at least medically speaking) person and I'd often cover 15 miles or more, after a strenuous workout in my home 'gym.' But I always loved the sense of grounded-ness—that literal contact with the earth—and yet, I have nothing but admiration for those who choose to fly, the pilots, skydivers, gymnasts and yes, those brave young kids who learn how to navigate just about any kind of surface (even the lack thereof!) on a contraption known as a skate board—or other wheeled device for similar purposes. I literally feel a loss of balance in just watching these gravitational magicians.

I can only imagine the level of agility attained and enjoyed by these individuals (including my Dad who had a private pilot's license before graduating high school around 1940, mind you. This heavenward ambition led him, and millions of others, thankfully into earth-shattering

events, the reverberations of we still feel to this day.) So, when I pass by the Catoctin Skate Park in Leesburg, Virginia, I do so with the memories of those who've gone further and higher and faster and in more gravitational configurations than I care to imagine.



And who knows? Some of our future aviation heroes may be yesterday or today's skateboarding champions, or 'mere' apprentices. Roll and fly well and safely, all of you, braver than I.

And you—if you'd like to enjoy a good case of the 'heebee-jeebies,' you could do a lot worse than to grab a section of park bench and spend a couple of hours enjoying the talents of some of our

young athletes at this local facility—located along Catoctin Circle—adjacent to the Loudoun County Volunteer Rescue Squad building, a few blocks west of Market Street.

Use of drugs is prohibited at the site, but you might want to pick up a few tablets of meclizine on the way home, just to make sure your feet are really on the ground. And, if you're anything like me, you can be very thankful to enjoy the full force of the gravitational pull offered by our planet. I feel better already.

And, you know? Come to think of it, it took a few more words, but I guess we didn't do too badly in our verbal description of the local skate park, did we? At least we refrained from using phrases like, "It rocks, Dude," or, more to my generation, "It's really cool!" But it most definitely is both of those, as well.

Postscript: I mentioned experience with vertigo at the top of the story: just to clarify, I've been working full-time for the US Postal Service in a very active position, despite the intermittent sensations—usually a feeling of falling and spinning at the same time, usually only upon waking. I'm fine for everyday situations, but I'll never be good with any kind of heights or sudden, cliff-like formations. I thank heaven the Grand Canyon is not located in Loudoun County, Virginia.

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## George C. Marshall House designated as a National Park Service affiliated area

George C. Marshall House designated as a National Park Service affiliated area

U.S. Representative Jennifer Wexton (D-VA-10) and U.S. Senators Mark R. Warner and Tim Kaine (both D-VA) applauded the Senate passage of legislation to designate the General George C. Marshall House in Leesburg, known as Dodona Manor, as an affiliated area under the National Park Service, on Dec. 20.

The lawmakers have advocated for years for an official designation, which would provide new resources to preserve and celebrate General Marshall's legacy at the site, including technical assistance to support restoration efforts, accessibility improvements, and new programming.

"Dodona Manor has a clear historic value to our nation and turning it into an affiliated area under NPS is a fitting way to honor General Marshall's life and legacy," said the lawmakers. "We're glad our legislation to help make that happen was passed by the Senate today and hope to see this designation come

to fruition."

General Marshall led a lifetime of public service, serving as Chief of Staff to the Army during America's entry into World War II, as Secretary of State where he orchestrated the historic Marshall Plan to rebuild Europe following the war, and as Secretary of Defense after the onset of the Korean War.

Dodona Manor is currently registered as a National Historic Landmark by the Department of the Interior and has been designated by the Commonwealth of Virginia as a Virginia Landmark.

The Marshall House has been an integral part of the Leesburg community for over two centuries. General Marshall and his wife Katherine purchased the property in 1941 as a weekend retreat house, and regularly spent time at the property throughout General Marshall's tenure as Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense.

Today, the property hosts international exchanges, historical exhibits, community events, and educational programming about the life and legacy of the Marshall family.

## Marsh to head Loudoun Office of Real Property Asset Management and Planning

Jacqueline Marsh has been selected as the first director of Loudoun County's Office of Real Property Asset Management and Planning, County Administrator Tim Hemstreet has announced. Marsh, who currently serves as an assistant director in the county's Department of Planning and Zoning, begins her new role Jan. 2.

The Office of Real Property Asset Management and Planning was created earlier this year within the Office of the County Administrator to focus on the county's land strategy and to manage the acquisition and disposition of land.

"Ms. Marsh has shown exceptional leadership since joining the county in 2016, demonstrated by her continual promotions within the Department of Planning and Zoning based on her excellent performance," said Hemstreet.

"She brings a wealth of knowledge and experience that will continue to serve Loudoun in this important new role that will require coordination of complex work among many stakeholders including property owners, the Board of Supervisors and departments across the county government," he said.



**GOVERNMENT**

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24 »

## Let's make 2025 a winning year through humility and kindness!

BY MICHAEL OBERSCHNEIDER, PSY.D.

Humility comes from the Latin word *humilis*, which literally means low. But as a virtue, humility is often misperceived as being something that is undesirable or unattainable. How is appearing small or insignificant or worthless in relation to others an attractive quality? To the contrary, truly humble people are strong in that they possess the capacity to deflect self-importance in the service of others or a greater good. Jesus, Mother Theresa, Gandhi and Buddha are exemplars and ultimate definitions of humility. But for most of us, figuring out how, when and where humility fits in our lives can seem like an arduous undertaking.



DR. MIKE

Going back to our hunter-gatherer ancestors and the days of self-preservation, evolutionary psychologists believe that we all possess a hardwired or natural tendency for self-advancement. Makes sense to me, who doesn't want to live in a nice house? Who doesn't want to drive a nice car? Who doesn't want to get promoted? Who doesn't want to have excess money to take nice vacations or to buy nice things? And what parent doesn't want their child to do as well or better in life than they did in terms of status?

But while having a drive to excel is a good thing, our life and work goals and priorities can also become compromised by the high value our culture places on personal status and wealth if we're not careful. Less attractive qualities such as fear, discrimination, grandiosity, jealousy, racism, narcissism, cynicism, bigotry can all serve to inhibit humility.

There's an old Italian proverb that reads, "Once the game is over, the King and the pawn go back in the same box." While there are multiple interpretations to this proverb, I think it's a nice reminder that we're all equal after "the game" of life is over; death is, after all, the great equalizer regardless of your station in life. I also think it's a reminder that we are united in this world of ours as humans and on the same team and that we all matter equally.

Research in this area has shown that the value and virtue of humility is priceless when it comes to personal and professional success and wellbeing. Studies have specifically shown that humble people have stronger and longer lasting personal relationships. They are more effective leaders, have greater tolerance for differences in others and lower rates of prejudice. Also, they have lower rates of anxiety and other psychological problems and higher rates of reported happiness and wellbeing.

The perception that humble people

are passive or weak or unsuccessful isn't supported by the research where studies have shown that humility is a distinguishing trait of CEOs of major organizations and corporations.

Moreover, research studies on kindness have repeatedly shown significant benefits to being kind. Kindness can improve mood and can increase self-esteem, compassion and empathy. Those who practice kindness have lower rates of stress and better relationships compared to those who do not place an emphasis on kindness. And the physical health benefits of kindness are profound. Those who value kindness have stronger immune systems, age slower, live longer, and have lower rates of cardiovascular disease.

In striving for increased humility and kindness in 2025, it's important to remember that changing or reframing the way you think is a process, and one that takes effort and time. Just like you shouldn't expect to have the physique you aspire to have after only going to the gym for a few times, don't expect yourself to change your thought patterns, feelings or relational style in a short time.

Here are a few ideas to consider if you'd like to live a humbler and kinder life in the coming year:

- Recognize your faults and shortcomings

- Go last
- Spend more time Listening than talking
- Try to understand others more than trying to get others to understand you
- Ask questions
- Acknowledge what you don't know or do well and ask for advice
- Confront your biases and prejudices
- Praise others and give compliments
- Ask for feedback
- Anonymously do a kind deed or two for someone daily
- Be thankful for all that you have

And with how divided things are in the U.S. these days, I think this is an excellent time to try out more humility and kindness in your life. Sure, there is always going to be disagreement when it comes to complex topics, but I would argue that getting along with others via humility and kindness will serve you better than holding steadfast to a position and to being right.

Here's to making humility and kindness a priority in your life in 2025!

*Michael Oberschneider, Psy.D. "Dr. Mike" is a clinical psychologist in private practice. He can be reached at 703-723-2999, and is located at 44095 Pipeline Plaza, Suite 240, Ashburn.*

Submitted by Joshua Wolinski, Edward Jones Financial Advisor

You may spend many decades contributing to your IRA and 401(k), but eventually you will likely need to take the money out—in fact, you *must* take the money out or face penalties. What should you know about these mandatory withdrawals?

Here are some of the basics:

- *What are they called?* Mandatory withdrawals are technically called required minimum distributions, or RMDs.



JOSHUA WOLINSKI

- *When must I take RMDs?* If you were born before 1951, you've probably already begun taking RMDs. If you were born

between 1951 and 1959, your RMD age is 73. And if you were born in 1960 or later, your RMD age is 75. You can postpone accepting your first RMD until April 1 of the year after you reach your RMD age, but this will result in two RMDs for the year. After you take your first RMD, you must take subsequent ones by December 31 of each year.

- *What penalties will be assessed if I don't take all my RMDs?* For every dollar not withdrawn, the IRS will charge a 25% penalty, but this can drop to 10% if you subsequently withdraw the correct amount within two years.

- *Which accounts have RMDs?* RMDs apply to traditional IRAs, as well as other types of IRAs, including SIMPLE and SEP IRAs. RMDs **don't** apply to Roth IRAs. RMDs also apply to traditional 401(k)s, but not Roth 401(k)s.

- *Can I withdraw more than the RMD for any given year?* Yes, you are free to take out as much as you want. However, if you take out more than the RMD for one year, you can't apply the excess to the RMD for the next year.

- *How are RMDs calculated?* Typically, your RMDs are determined by dividing your account balance from the prior December 31 by a life expectancy factor published by the IRS. Your financial

professional should be able to perform this calculation for you.

- *If I have multiple accounts, do I have to take an RMD from each one?* If you are taking RMDs from a traditional IRA, you must calculate each RMD individually, but you can take the total amount from one or more IRAs. If you're taking RMDs from a 401(k) or similar plan, you must take the RMD from each of your accounts.

- *How are RMDs taxed?* You are typically taxed at your income tax rate on the amount of the withdrawn RMD. You may be able to avoid taxes in a particular year if you transfer your RMDs to a qualified charity in what's known as a qualified charitable distribution.

- *If I inherit an IRA or 401(k), am I subject to RMDs?* Yes. When you take RMDs from an inherited account, you generally must withdraw all the funds within 10 years, as opposed to over your lifetime, which is the RMD window that applies to

your own accounts. The rules are somewhat different if you inherit an IRA or 401(k) from your spouse. In any case, though, you'll want to consult with your tax advisor about how to take RMDs from an inherited account.

If you're already subject to RMDs, be sure you've taken them before the year ends. And if you haven't yet started taking RMDs, learn as much as you can about them — because the more you know, the more likely you'll make the right moves at the right time.

Remember, your individual financial goals and questions deserve individual attention. If you think you might need specific financial advice, please reach out to a local financial advisor.

*This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Edward Jones. Member SIPC.*

Joshua Wolinski | (540) 338-2291 | [joshua.wolinski@edwardjones.com](mailto:joshua.wolinski@edwardjones.com)

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## Carry On: A Holiday Thriller That's Anything but Jolly

BY NAOMI FRASER

Christmas Eve at LAX and chaos go hand in hand. Long lines, delayed flights, and anxious travelers collide to create a hectic holiday rush. But for TSA agent Ethan Kopek (Taron Egerton), Christmas



NAOMI FRASER

Rating: 5/5

Eve is just another day on the job. That is until he encounters a mysterious traveler (Jason Bateman) who presents him with a terrifying ultimatum: allow a dangerous bag through security or watch his girlfriend Nora (Sofia Carson) die. Now trapped in a scheme that could destroy hundreds of lives, Ethan must race against the clock (and a

team of highly trained criminals) to keep the carry-on bag from going up in the air. Thrilling, fast-paced, and intense, *Carry On* is a Netflix must-watch that captivates from beginning to end.

While many factors play into *Carry On's* overarching intrigue, its use of power reversals between Ethan and the Traveler ranks as number one. When the Traveler begins his blackmailing campaign, he holds all the power: if Ethan disobeys, his girlfriend dies.

But as our hero gains confidence and discovers creative ways to undermine his opponent, a battle for control breaks out. When one side has the upper hand, the other launches a surprise attack that throws everything out of balance. This

oscillation between gaining and losing the advantage keeps audiences engaged and on edge—we can never fully celebrate Ethan's wins knowing that the Traveler's next move is right around the corner.

The anxiety the power reversals induce strengthens when met with the film's unpredictable nature. *Carry On's* writers take special care to eliminate every obvious solution to Ethan's dilemma early on. Whenever you think "What if Ethan just did A, B, or C?" the Traveler unveils an obstacle that renders the idea useless.

The filmmakers force us to reckon with the helplessness of the situation—there is no easy way out for Ethan. As a result, how the remainder of the film plays out is completely up in the air. The audience cannot predict what's going to happen from moment to moment, allowing every twist and turn to feel surprising and fun.

*Carry On* also employs dramatic irony

to enhance the story. While the audience is privy to the nightmare Ethan endures, everyone around him remains unaware. As the Traveler keeps Ethan silent through blackmail, misunderstandings arise and drive wedges between Ethan and the people he cares about, instilling viewers with a desire to jump through the screen and show his family and friends the truth. The frustration the dramatic irony fosters enhances the audience's engagement with the film. The more Ethan unwillingly ruins his relationships, the more invested we become in his fight to restore balance.

While the plot is fast-paced and exciting, it represents only a fraction of what *Carry On* is really about. The film's interplay between its inner and outer stories allows it to transcend the basic plot and effectively convey its theme. The external story covers the central premise: a TSA agent is blackmailed into allowing a

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# Randall receives Scull Metropolitan Public Service Award

At the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG) 2024 Business Meeting & Awards Reception on Dec. 11, Loudoun County Chair At-Large Phyllis J. Randall was presented with the Elizabeth and David Scull Metropolitan Public Service Award.

**GOVERNMENT** The Scull Public Service Award is annually conferred upon an elected official serving an MWCOG jurisdiction. It is given in the memory of former Montgomery County Councilmembers Elizabeth and David Scull, and is considered the highest award the Council of Governments can bestow.

This year, the award was presented to the Chair by D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser and D.C. Council Chairman Phil Mendelson. Said Chair Randall, "I am humbled and honored to receive the Scull

Public Service Award, and I will continue to work with my regional colleagues to ensure the DMV is a wonderful place to live, work, and play.

"Fluid regional collaboration is what makes it what makes the D.C. metropolitan area a flourishing place for businesses and families alike. I look forward to working with my fellow MWCOG members in the new year," she said.

Randall thanked Clark Mercer, Executive Director of the Council of Governments, Mayor Bowser, and Chairman Mendelson, as well as the Metropolitan Council of Governments for their continued support.

A special thanks was also issued to Loudoun County Executive Tim Hemstreet and county staff, Chair Randall's office staff, and to the citizens of Loudoun County, whom she is most honored to serve.



From L to R: Little River Supervisor Laura TeKrony, Loudoun County Chair Phyllis Randall and DC Mayor Muriel Bowser.

Randall was also a member of the nominating committee for MWCOG's 2025 Corporate Officers. Members Denise Mitchell, Catherine Read, Kenyan McDuffie, and Michael O'Connor were officially named, and will begin serving in their new official capacities next year.

# Growth forecasts guide Loudoun's long-term planning

The Loudoun County Board of Supervisors approved a set of guidelines during its Dec. 3, meeting that is intended to help the county plan for future growth and associated needs. The guidelines, recommended by the

county's Fiscal Impact Committee, include updated long-range forecasts for residential and nonresidential development, population, households and employment, which are considered by the Board of Supervisors and the

county's planners on a regular basis.

### Residential Development Forecasts

As of 2024, residential development in Loudoun County, which includes both owned and rental units, is estimated to

have 150,656 housing units, reflecting a 6.0% increase, or 8,582 additional units, since 2020. The guidelines project an additional 35,952 residential units, 23.9%, will be built by 2050.

### Nonresidential Development Forecasts

Nonresidential development in

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24 »

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# Warner & Kaine celebrate Inflation Reduction Act's cap on drug costs

On Dec. 30, U.S. Senators Mark R. Warner and Tim Kaine (both D-VA) celebrated a provision of the *Inflation Reduction Act* that will go into effect on Jan. 1, to cap out-of-pocket costs for prescription drugs at \$2,000 per year for Americans with Medicare Part D. The cap will apply to individuals' combined, total costs for covered drugs—regardless of how many medications they need. Some estimates have shown that Virginians on Medicare will save an average of \$440.62 on out-of-pocket costs on prescription drugs thanks to this cap.

### GOVERNMENT

“The *Inflation Reduction Act* has already made a huge difference in the lives of Virginians. It's capped the price of insulin at \$35 per month for seniors, lowered health care and energy costs, brought millions of dollars in investment to Virginia, and created manufacturing jobs—all while lowering the deficit,” said the senators. “We're thrilled that beginning in 2025, Americans on Medicare will have a \$2,000 per year out-of-pocket cap on prescription drugs. Many seniors currently pay thousands of dollars a year for medications they need, so this provision is crucial to saving them

money. We will keep working to build on this progress and ensure that Virginia harnesses all the benefits of the *Inflation Reduction Act*.”

In 2025, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services is also expected to announce 15 more Medicare Part D drugs for negotiation. The IRA allowed CMS to negotiate the price of prescription drugs for the first time—a move Warner and Kaine had long pushed for. This year, the Biden Administration announced negotiated prices for the first 10 drugs for patients covered by Medicare Part D. The negotiated prices for the first 10 drugs, which will go into effect in 2026, will save \$1.5 billion for Americans with Medicare Part D and \$6 billion in the federal budget in the first year of implementation.

# Loudoun expanding behavioral health crisis services

Loudoun County is breaking ground on a new \$16.6 million 20,500-square-foot Crisis Receiving and Stabilization Center that will provide around-the-clock care, including urgent psychiatric care, for adults who are experiencing a behavioral health crisis.

The future CRSC will operate 365 days of the year, with 10 beds for people who are experiencing a behavioral health crisis that requires stabilization and 16

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24 »



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# Loudoun County to host Job Fair Jan. 15

The Loudoun Workforce Resource Center will host a Loudoun Job Fair on Jan. 15, 11 a.m.-2 p.m., at the Claude Moore Recreation & Community Center, 46105 Loudoun Park Lane in Sterling.

The Loudoun Job Fair will feature more than 30 local employers with full-time, part-time and seasonal job openings in Loudoun County. Opportunities are available in the fields of aviation, education, food service, health care, hospitality, human services, law enforcement, local government, recreation, trades, transportation and warehousing.

Job seekers are encouraged to prepare for the fair:

- Attend an in-person or virtual preparatory workshop: "Ready, Set, Go to the Job Fair." Register at [wrcareers.eventbrite.com](http://wrcareers.eventbrite.com).
- Get a free copy of "Turn a Job Fair Into a Job Offer." Call 703-777-0150 or email [wrc@loudoun.gov](mailto:wrc@loudoun.gov).
- Dress professionally and bring multiple resume copies to the job fair.

Those planning to attend the job fair are encouraged to pre-register at [loudoun.gov/JobFair](http://loudoun.gov/JobFair).

Anyone who requires an accommodation for any disability in order to participate, should contact the Loudoun Workforce Resource Center at 703-777-0150, three days in advance.

Call 703-777-0150 or visit [loudoun.gov/wrc](http://loudoun.gov/wrc).

# Winter Reading Challenge for teens and adults

Loudoun County Public Library invites teens and adults to sign up for its most relaxing Winter Reading Challenge to date.

Starting Wednesday, Jan. 1, participants can register online and log their number of hours spent reading during January and February. Contestants can earn up to seven raffle tickets and will be automatically

entered into a grand-prize drawing Friday, Feb. 28.

One teen and one adult will be drawn at each of LCPL's 10 branches to win themed gift baskets. Winners will be contacted in March. Having an LCPL library card is not required to enter.

For full details and registration, visit [library.loudoun.gov/winterread](http://library.loudoun.gov/winterread).

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## BRMS students continue the tradition of learning through giving

The Career and Technical Education Students at Blue Ridge Middle School have contributed for the seventh consecutive year to a service-based learning project that supports local veterans' organizations, Hero Homes.

Across all three grades, students collaborated to prepare "Show Smore Support," a special fundraiser for veterans. Sixth-grade students in Mrs. Tiffany Whalen's Computer Applications class researched different military branches and used their skills in various computer programs to create infographic advertisements for the event.

Eighth grade students in Mr. Brian Tompkins' Technical Education class learned the proper precautions and procedures for fire safety. They then assembled and tested the marshmallow roasters for on-the-spot s'more cooking. The logo for the event, used on advertisements and flyers, was created by a student in Tompkins' Technology Education 7 course.

Seventh and eighth-grade students in Mrs. Holly Myers and Mrs. Anna Inns' Family and Consumer Science classes measured and packaged the s'more ingredients and managed the finances. This is a project-based learning at its finest across grade levels and curriculum.

"We are proud to support Hero Homes and the work they do in our community. The funds raised at the "Show S'more Support" event will go towards their latest home build in Round Hill. Year after year Blue Ridge students have a connection

in some way to this project and are able to see the direct support of this community at our event," said Holly Myers, Family and Consumer Sciences Teacher and Department Chair.

During the Loudoun Valley High School Freshman and Junior Varsity football games against Woodgrove on Nov. 4, the community rallied to support the cause. S'more kits, provided upon donation, raised \$560.

Over the years, this initiative has raised more than \$2,500 for veteran organizations. The funds were donated to a local veteran support organization, Hero Homes. Hero Homes is a 100% non-profit organization, based in Purcellville, VA, that builds houses in the Western Loudoun Community for those who have defended freedom and democracy.

On Dec. 12, Sam Chapman, chairman of the Hero Homes Board and CEO of CaseCo attended the check presentation ceremony at Blue Ridge Middle School and spoke to a group of 6th, 7th and 8th grade students. Chapman shared his special connection with Hero Homes as he reflected on his friendship with Spc. Stephan Mace through his years as a student at Blue Ridge Middle and Loudoun Valley High School. Chapman was inspirational in his vision for Hero Homes and passion for students to engage with their community through meaningful work.

The BRMS community's unwavering dedication and collaborative energy are at the heart of this impactful project.

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## LCPL announces annual writing contest for teens and adults

Loudoun County Public Library invites teen and adult customers to enter its annual Short Story Contest—which runs Sunday, Dec. 15 through Saturday, Feb. 15, 2025—for a chance to win a cash prize.

This year's contest encourages participants to craft compelling, original stories in 3,000 words or less. Whether

you're an experienced writer or want to try your hand, this is your chance to share your voice and imagination with the community.

Participants are split into three categories: middle school, high school and adult. Submissions will be accepted online and judged according to age group. Cash prizes will be awarded to the top three

# Loudon's historic cemeteries a link to our past

BY AL VAN HUYCK, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,  
LOUDOUN CEMETERY CONSERVANCY

My wife and I have lived in an 1816 Historic Farmhouse for over 50 years, but it is only a few years ago that we had the records searched and found out who was the owner who built the house. And it was with much excitement that we located his grave at the Ketoctin Baptist Church and could stand at the very site of his resting place amongst the honored veterans of the war of 1812. It made the connection seem real. We worked on the same farm, ate and slept in the same rooms as he did with his wife and children over 200 years earlier.

The many historic buildings in Loudoun were once the home and work areas of those who built them, and are now in their resting place. We appreciate the buildings, but we also should honor those who built them and lived out their lives within their walls.

Loudoun County has over two hundred heritage cemeteries including graves of African Americans enslaved and free, Veterans from the American Revolution, the War of 1812, the Civil War, as well as family cemeteries of the early residents of Loudoun County.

Collectively, these cemeteries contribute to the rich heritage of Loudoun County. They should be maintained in their original form and condition out of respect for the people who are buried there, and the family and friends who laid them to rest.

In Loudoun County, where family lines run deep into history, the preservation

and restoration of our 229 heritage cemeteries is an important objective. Our Board of Supervisors authorized the identification of all the cemeteries in Loudoun County to form a database. And this in turn was used to create an interactive map in the GIS and Mapping Department. More recently, the new zoning and FSM (Facilities Standard Manual) have provided good protection for heritage cemeteries swept up in new development projects, and for legal access of family and relatives of those buried there.

Some of these important cemeteries are already under the management of friends or trustees who volunteer many hours of work to maintain the cemetery's landscaping, and grave restoration and provide a special place to honor those buried there. But many others are not being maintained then again restored because they have been abandoned, or those who appreciate them have neither the skills nor funding to maintain them and restore them to their special place in Loudoun's history.

Now a new source of support has emerged in the form of the Loudoun Cemetery Conservancy. It is a non-partisan, non-profit 501c3 organization which seeks to:

- Provide public information on the importance of cemeteries to the heritage of Loudoun County.
- Manage inquiries from the public and maintain contact with the State and County specialized staff with cemetery expertise.
- Assist cemeteries seeking to



Grave stones awaiting restoration.

have Trustees appointed with the procedures and follow through.

- Provide a schedule of regular training sessions for volunteers interested in working in the field of cemeteries, landscaping and grave restoration, under professional guidance.
- Provide grant support as funding permits, to maintain and restore neglected or abandoned cemeteries in partnership with the owners and friends of cemeteries in need. This will be done through a competitive application process and expert review.

If you are interested in the preservation and restoration of Loudoun's historic cemeteries, I urge you to contact the Loudoun Cemetery Conservancy and explore how we can assist you and you can assist us.

Our next Training Course for Volunteers is scheduled for Saturday, Feb. 22,



A restored gravestone honors the person interred there.

2025. Applications to attend are now available. Learn about the correct methods of landscaping and grave restoration from experts in the field.

If you represent a historic cemetery, which we define as the majority of the people buried there were born before 1900, and are interested in being considered for grant support:

Request an application by email at [info@loudouncemeteryconservancy.org](mailto:info@loudouncemeteryconservancy.org).

If you just want to read more about the Loudoun Cemetery Conservancy, go to our website [www.loudouncemeteryconservancy.org](http://www.loudouncemeteryconservancy.org), where we also would welcome a donation if you are so inclined.

*Al Van Huyck is a longtime supporter of historic preservation and environmental causes in Loudoun County having served in leadership roles in the Loudoun Preservation Society, a founder and president of the Friends of the Blue Ridge Mountains, and a founder and chair for 15 years of the Loudoun County Preservation and Conservation Coalition. The organization of the Loudoun Cemetery Conservancy with his colleagues fulfills another major interest.*

## Environmental Commission seeks nominations for Environmental Awards

The Loudoun County Environmental Commission is calling for nominations for the third annual Environmental Excellence Awards, honoring individuals, businesses, nonprofit organizations and educators for their leadership on environmental issues. Past winners have included projects such as supporting community recycling services, engaging students as young naturalists, and volunteering in stream protection efforts.

The nominations should include a brief overview of the project or person being nominated, information on how the project or person contributed to the preservation and/or protection of Loudoun County's environment, what

specific results have been achieved, whether the project is sustainable and what best practices can be learned from the initiative.

### Award Categories

Nominations are being accepted in six categories:

- Business
- Citizen or Community Group (Examples: Nonprofit organization, club, homeowners association, faith-based group, etc.)
- Educator – Teacher or School employee
- Government Employee or Program/Team
- Lifetime Achievement (Individual)

- Student – Individual or Group (For a student-initiated project)

People and projects should be nominated for activities that took place between January 2024 and February 2025, with the exception of the Lifetime Achievement award.

The deadline for nominations is March 3, 2025. Winners will be notified in March with presentation of the awards scheduled for April at a meeting of the Board of Supervisors.

More information, including a link to the nomination form, is online at [loudoun.gov/EnvironmentalAwards](http://loudoun.gov/EnvironmentalAwards).

The Loudoun County Environmental Commission was created by the Board of Supervisors in 2021 to advise the Board and make recommendations

on policies and practices related to the environment, sustainability and energy strategies. Members of the commission include representation from the community, industry and higher education.

Anyone interested in environmental- and energy-related news from the Loudoun County government may subscribe to the Environment & Energy category available from the Notify Me/New Flash section of the Loudoun County website.

More information about Loudoun County's efforts to increase environmental sustainability and resilience for the health, safety and welfare of Loudoun residents and businesses is available at [loudoun.gov/environment](http://loudoun.gov/environment).

# Youngkin invests \$51.25 Million to accelerate K-12

Gov. Glenn Youngkin has announced a \$51.25 million budget investment to direct critical resources to students most in need, as identified by the Virginia Board of Education's School Performance and Support Framework. This investment will further enhance the implementation of the Road to Readiness Resource Hub, a transformational tool by the Virginia Department of Education introduced last month to provide transparent, data-driven insights into school performance and support mechanisms for students, families, and educators.

"With this targeted investment, we are strengthening our commitment to deliver for students across the Commonwealth by ensuring resources directly reach those who need them most," said Youngkin. "Our students cannot wait; therefore, we are making these investments now to accelerate learning and unleash opportunity to succeed."

This one-time \$50 million invest-

The Board is ready to prioritize these monies where the data says the greatest needs and student gaps are with evidence-based and effective practices and infrastructure to help our students truly be ready for life.

— Grace Creasey  
President, Virginia Board  
of Education

ment as well as \$1.25 million in ongoing funds to VDOE's Office of School Quality for regional support specialists focused on math, literacy, and science will prioritize additional resources to schools that have the most need to better support their students' achievement. Out of this new investment:

- **\$250,000** the first year and **\$1,000,000** the second year is provided for new Office of School Quality regional support specialists to assist divisions and schools with the biggest student gaps in math, literacy, and science.
- **\$50,000,000** is provided for

FY25 to support infrastructure, technical training, and evidence-based supports needed for the preliminarily identified Needs Intensive Support schools. These funds will be expended by the Virginia Board of Education, in consultation with VDOE, and shall be used to support data-driven, evidence-based supports focused on the following priorities:

- **Leadership Development** including principal training, mentorship, and coaching, as well as instructional leadership professional development;
- **Mastery and Growth Supports** including grants for schools preliminarily identified as Off Track or Needs Intensive Support to partner with non-profits specializing in school improvement techniques with proven results at improving student outcomes; piloting math competency models; and providing additional Virginia Literacy Act implementation support;
- **Readiness Supports** including an infrastructure platform for academic career plans, college and career readiness, and work-based learning; a statewide attendance and data dashboard; start-up grants for middle school advanced courses; guidance counselor training and support; and seat time flexibility support;
- **New Virginia IEP System Modules** to better serve students with disabilities; and
- **Capturing Best Practices** by partnering with a research institution to learn from Virginia's high performing economically disadvantaged 'Beat the Odds' schools and scale proven practices to other economically disadvantaged schools to better serve students.

"The Board is ready to prioritize these monies where the data says the greatest needs and student gaps are with evidence-based and effective practices and infrastructure to help our students truly be ready for life," said Virginia Board of Education President Grace Creasey. "We must act swiftly to help students now, not

years from now."

Since the beginning of the Youngkin Administration, Virginia has made record-setting investments in education, including an 18 percent increase in teacher salaries, over \$1.6 billion in grants and loans to support school construction, and an increase in direct aid to K-12 public education of \$7.3 billion from \$14.3 billion in FY 2019-2020 to \$21.6 billion in the current biennium. Building upon these unprecedented commitments, the current biennial budget allocates over \$21 billion in education funding to local K-12 schools.

The School Performance and Support Framework builds on Youngkin's commitment to high expectations, transparency, accountability for results, and targeted support to empower schools and improve student outcomes across the Commonwealth. Under the School Performance and Support Framework, K-12 public schools are evaluated based on an index of mastery, growth, and readiness.

"Since day one we said we would prioritize resources to support the students, schools, and communities that need it the most. Due to the unprecedented amount of actionable information available in the Performance Framework, this major investment makes it possible to provide the schools most in need with tailored resources that are focused on enhancing school performance and ensuring every learner is on track for success," said Secretary of Education Aimee Guidera.

The Framework evaluates school performance across elementary, middle, and high school through three areas of focus:

- **Mastery** incorporates all student *Standards of Learning* test results. It awards additional credit for students who reach advanced levels and partial credit for students who do not yet meet grade-level standards.
- **Growth** uses past performance on Virginia SOL tests to measure expected learning and compare it to actual learning at the end of the year. The metric then compares expected learning to actual learning at the end of the year.
- **Readiness** considers measures

such as chronic absenteeism and the percentage of students demonstrating post-secondary readiness upon graduating from high school through the 3E Framework (Enrollment, Employment, and Enlistment). It also includes the percentage of students graduating on time.

Each of the three areas of focus is weighted differently to meet the focus of the school, as follows:

- **Elementary Schools:** Mastery (65%), Growth (25%), Readiness (10%)
- **Middle Schools:** Mastery (60%), Growth (20%), Readiness (20%)
- **High Schools:** Mastery (50%), Readiness (35%), Graduation (15%)

The School Performance and Support Framework categorizes schools into four performance tiers to provide targeted support. A summative rating encompassing all public K-12 schools is expected in Fall 2025, but preliminary data on these tiers shows the following:

- **Distinguished:** Exceeding state expectations (273 schools).
- **On Track:** Meeting state expectations (883 schools).
- **Off Track:** Below state expectations; receiving additional VDOE support (409 schools).
- **Needs Intensive Support:** Significantly below expectations; receiving intensive VDOE intervention (208 schools).

The Virginia Board of Education voted to replace Virginia's outdated and nontransparent school accreditation system in October 2023. After 30 public engagements across the Commonwealth and multiple public comment opportunities, the Board moved forward with a split accreditation system and new accountability model, the School Performance and Support Framework, which focuses on student outcomes and provide real transparency for parents, educators, and community leaders. To ensure students and schools have the supports they need, the Virginia Board of Education voted in August 2024 to transform the state's confusing system to have a clear school accountability model through the new School Performance and Support Framework.

# Loudoun County offers parent support program

Loudoun County families with youth experiencing challenging peer and family relationships and life crises can get support. Loudoun offers a parent support program to help parents learn strategies and techniques to better support their children and manage difficult situations in the home. Parents will learn constructive skills proven to decrease problem behaviors, reduce family conflict and improve the family dynamic. The program is based on the evidence-based curriculum Parenting Wisely. All programs are free, but seats are limited, and registration is required. The schedule of upcoming sessions is as follows:

## Parenting Wisely – Teen Edition

The Parenting Wisely – Teen Edition program is available to Loudoun County families with a child between the ages of 11-17 that has had one of more of the following problems: running away, failing grades, truancy and poor school attendance/avoidance, drug and alcohol experimentation, or concerning behaviors, to include aggression at home,

school and/or in the community.

Families may participate in individual sessions or multi-family group sessions. The program works to: help families to understand the barriers and behaviors that may be impacting the family dynamic; share information on parenting styles and adolescent development; and teach coping strategies to help improve communication and create mutual respect. In addition, the curriculum can assist families with developing family contracts and safety plans, as needed.

## The Parenting Wisely – Teen Edition is offered in English and Spanish.

The English language program is offered virtually for 5 weeks on Wednesdays, 6 - 7:30 p.m. The dates of the next sessions are:

- Jan. 8 – Feb. 5
- Feb. 26 – March 26
- April 23 – May 21
- June 4 – July 2

The Spanish language program is offered in person for 10 weeks on Tuesdays, 5:30 – 7 p.m. at the Loudoun

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24 »

## CARRY ON, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

carry-on bag through security.

The internal story delves deeper, giving us insight into Ethan’s emotional struggles. We learn early on that Ethan hates his job but stays because he sees no other option. Having once fallen short of achieving his dream, he now believes there’s no point in trying again. Staying put may leave him unfulfilled, but at least it keeps him safe from the pain of failure.

*Carry On*’s external story challenges this mindset, acting as a metaphor for Ethan’s internal journey. Ethan must

choose between playing it safe and enabling the Traveler’s plans or taking a risk and fighting back. This connection between his inner and outer struggles adds depth to the plot. Every step Ethan takes toward defeating the Traveler is one step toward overcoming the part of himself that holds him back from fighting for the life he wants.

Exciting, heartfelt, and even a bit funny here and there, *Carry On* deserves a spot on your movies-to-watch list. If you are a fan of thrillers, this film will not disappoint. It’s a story that will stay with you long after the credits roll.

## BOS APPROVES, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

more arts programs.

## Vision Statement

The Board also adopted a minor revision to its vision statement to make it more inclusive by recognizing both residents of the county and visitors to the county by adding the words “and visitors” to the statement. The Board’s vision statement now reads: “While appreciating and acknowledging our rich history, Loudoun County strives to be a prosperous, inclusive, equitable and sustainable community where residents and visitors feel free to live, work, learn and play.”

## Next Steps

Now that the Board has formalized its

strategic focus areas for the current term, a work plan will be developed that captures the county’s many initiatives that put into action the vision and goals of the Board during its term. The work plan will help county staff, who implement the Board’s strategic direction, to prioritize projects to achieve the Board’s intended outcomes. Through regular updates to the Board regarding its strategic initiatives, the Board may provide additional guidance in the future. The first work plan update for the Board in the current term is expected to be presented to the Board for review and input in the early part of 2025.

Updates on the Board’s strategic work plan are posted on the county’s website at [loudoun.gov/vision](http://loudoun.gov/vision).



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## PRCS to hold public input meetings to create vision for arts

The Loudoun County Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Services announces upcoming in-person and virtual workshops to seek public input to help create a Comprehensive Arts Plan for the County.

The Comprehensive Arts Plan will create a vision for the arts in Loudoun County and develop a clear set of goals and strategies regarding the development of public support of the arts that recognize and highlight the County's unique attributes. The arts plan will guide the government and community for long-term arts and cultural programming, providing strategies for the visual and performing arts.

Designing Local, a professional firm working nationally in arts and cultural planning, collected public input from an online survey in Fall 2024, and will host public workshops beginning in January 2025 where residents can share their perspectives on the arts and culture in Loudoun County.

Community members will have opportunities at four in-person workshops and three virtual meetings to share what they would like to see included in the Comprehensive Arts Plan. Each of the meetings will have identical content and opportunities to talk with the arts planning team. Each in-person workshop will be facilitated with an activity by an artist from the community.

### In-Person Workshops:

- Interested attendees for the in-person workshops are requested to register at [Loudoun.jotform.com/243374557640259](http://Loudoun.jotform.com/243374557640259).
- Monday, Jan. 13, 5:30-7 p.m. at Franklin Park Performing and Visual Arts Center, 36441 Blueridge View Lane, Purcellville
- Monday, Jan. 13, 6-7:30 p.m. at Manna Pottery, 36 Pidgeon Hill Drive, Sterling

- Tuesday, Jan. 14, 8:30-10 a.m. at Douglass Community Center, 405 East Market Street, Leesburg
- Tuesday, Jan. 14, 5:30-7 p.m. at Dulles South Senior Center, 24950 Riding Center Drive, South Riding

### Virtual Meetings:

- Thursday, Jan. 30, 6:30-8 p.m., (Zoom Meeting)
- Monday, Feb. 3, 6-7:30 p.m., (Zoom Meeting)
- Wednesday, Feb. 5, 6-7:30 p.m., (Zoom Meeting)

### Eastern Loudoun Community Arts Center Planning Study

Loudoun's Comprehensive Arts Plan is a separate initiative from the Eastern Loudoun County Community Arts Center Planning Study, which concluded public input meetings in November 2024. To learn more about the Eastern Loudoun County Community Arts Center Planning Study, go to [loudoun.gov/EasternArtsCenter](http://loudoun.gov/EasternArtsCenter).

The Loudoun County Board of Supervisors provided for an Art Programs Initiative in January 2023. This initiative is operating within the Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Services. Temporary staffing positions have been tasked with increasing the visibility of the Loudoun County Art Collection, as well as managing the development of the Comprehensive Arts Plan for the County.

Since September 2024, Designing Local has conducted a wide-reaching series of interviews with Loudoun citizens engaged in the arts, arts organizations, government officials and economic development staff through one-on-one meetings, focus groups, and a tour of the county.

Visit [loudoun.gov/arts](http://loudoun.gov/arts) for more information on the Loudoun County Comprehensive Arts Plan and to register for an in-person workshop or attend a virtual public meeting.

## The Art Advisory Committee presents *Winter*

The Loudoun County Art Advisory Committee presents a group show by the Waterford Quilters Guild, titled *Winter*, which started mid-December through Jan. 31, 2025. The artwork is displayed in Gallery One, located in the Loudoun County Government Center lobby, 1 Harrison Street SE in Leesburg.

In *Winter*, the WQG explores the wide array of styles and traditions in quilt making. The artwork is available for public viewing Monday through Thursday from 8:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Gallery One exhibits are coordinated by the Loudoun County Art Advisory Committee, appointed by the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors. The committee is responsible for exhibiting work by Loudoun artists and maintaining and exhibiting the county's permanent art collection. For more information about the committee, visit [loudoun.gov/advisory-art](http://loudoun.gov/advisory-art).

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# Miller receives Williams Trophy

Katelyn Miller, a 2024 graduate of Loudoun Valley High School, recently received a new honor from the Washington Airport Task Force, as they celebrated this year's theme of "Women in Space and Aviation".

Miller was selected as the "Shining Star" at the 42nd annual general meeting and trophy presentation on Dec. 9. Miller, alongside Ellen Ochoa, Pamela Melroy, Candace McGraw, and Angela Gittens, received the prestigious Williams Trophy. It recognizes those whose leadership, vision, and dedication in the application of aviation or space has enriched the quality of life on Earth.

Miller is the youngest of the 35 Williams Trophy recipients, and she was selected because of her extensive education and numerous accomplishments within the industry. She expressed gratitude, saying, "I am incredibly honored to receive this award among such inspirational women. Ellen, Pam, Candace, Angela, and all of the other women who came before me, in the fields of

aviation and space, opened these doors that I now get to walk through, allowing me to pursue my goals and dreams. I am so grateful for this community, and it is a great privilege to represent the next generation of innovators in these fields."

Miller has held a variety of leadership roles in many VA Space Grant Consortium programs. At NASA Wallops Flight Facility, she studied polar stratospheric clouds while serving as an Instrumentation Specialist and Program Manager for a simulated sounding rocket mission.

Last summer, she was the Deputy Systems Manager at NASA Langley, coordinating the work of 60 Aerospace Science and Technology Scholars to produce a simulated mission to Mars. Additionally, she researched quantum magnetometry developments for space debris



detection and presented her findings at the Quantum World Congress. In her free time, she also participated and trained as a student pilot with the Virginia Pathways Flight Academy.

Currently Miller is enrolled at Harvard College and is studying Mechanical Engineering and Astrophysics. She continues inspiring the newest generation of young girls to enter STEM fields while mentoring and teaching in the Boston community through the Science Club for Girls.

She is a member of the Student Astronomers at Harvard-Radcliffe, where she pursues her interests in astronomy and astrophysics at Harvard's Michael-Loomis Observatory. She is also a member of Harvard's Undergraduate CubeSat team where she serves as a mechanical engineer, helping to design and develop a satellite to be launched by NASA in 2026.

## Fire and Rescue welcomes newest explosives detection canine



On Friday, Dec. 13, the Loudoun County Fire and Rescue Fire Marshal's Office celebrated the graduation of Explosives Detection Canine Zo and her handler, Investigator Michael Kenyon, from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives—

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Explosives

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Zo is a female yellow Labrador Retriever and was born on March 18, 2023. She was raised by the Guide Dog Foundation prior to being selected by the ATF for specialized training as an EDC. Following graduation, EDC Zo officially began her service with the Loudoun County Combined

Fire and Rescue System.

"We are very excited to welcome EDC Zo to the System and know her and her handler, Investigator Kenyon, will work to ensure the safety of the Loudoun community and the region," said Chief Fire Marshal Micah Kiger.

Zo was one of nine canines

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24 »



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## JK Community Farm had record year of food donated to area pantries

The JK Community Farm, a 150-acre farm in Purcellville, Virginia that grows crops and livestock and donates them to nonprofits, capped off another great year of fighting food insecurity in the DMV, donating over 247,000 pounds of fresh, organic produce and protein to local food banks.

“We are grateful to our volunteer workforce and donors who have helped us meet the growing needs of our community. We continue to grow and evolve as part of our commitment to being a great partner in ending hunger as well as an educational resource about chemical free farming,” explained Samantha Kuhn, Executive Director of JK Community Farm.

This season, over 6,700 volunteers contributed more than 20,000 hours of service. The farm also hosted over 75 companies from across the US and as far as away Ireland for corporate team building events.

Amid a hot, dry summer with a lot of deer pressure, the volunteers persevered and helped plant, weed, and harvest, playing a vital role in putting healthy meals on tables. In all, the farm harvested and donated over 67 varieties of produce including broccoli, kale, peppers, cabbage, cauliflower, watermelon, summer squash, butternut squash, kohlrabi, lettuce, potatoes. In June, the farm had a record harvest of nearly 23,000 pounds.

The farm also planted its first orchard of 100 fruit trees (apples, pears, persimmons, cherries), added 22 new perennial raised beds, and trialed a new regenerative herb plot. As part of its work to alleviate food inse-



curity and reduce chronic disease, the farm educates people about food justice and healthy eating.

This past year the farm developed a hands-on food education program to help kids and their families understand the connection between soil, plants, people, and health. The curriculum complements the

farm’s field trip program which sprouted during COVID and is now a staple for many schools.

Each year the farm has expanded its capacity, adding plots, raised beds, and high tunnels to increase production. In 2023, the farm hit a donation milestone, pushing it past the one million pounds mark. The farm relies on a staff of three and teams of volunteers.

With support from local companies and nonprofits, the farm meets the community’s expanding needs. Major donors include JK Moving Services, Truist, Charlson Bredehoff Cohen & Brown, Joseph E Roberts Charitable Trust, Joyce Van Lines, Virginia Easement Exchange, and more. In addition, the farm hosts an annual Plant-A-Thon, which raises needed funds as teams of volunteers planted nearly 30,000 seedlings that provide 100,000 nutrient-dense meals.

JK Community Farm, a nonprofit started in 2018 seeks to have a lasting and healthy impact on struggling families within the Washington, DC region by growing and donating chemical free, healthy produce and protein to those struggling with hunger.

As the nation’s largest chemical-free community farm with 100% of its yield donated, which is distributed by nonprofit partners: Loudoun Hunger Relief, Food for Others, Arlington Food Assistance Center, and DC Central Kitchen. For more information go to [www.jkcommunityfarm.org](http://www.jkcommunityfarm.org).

### “LET’S KEEP VIRGINIA WINNING,” CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

7.3% growth rate that we have already realized year-to-date, which means that as we stand here today, we are already \$152 million ahead of this new December forecast,” said Youngkin.

“We have provided Virginia families over \$5 billion of tax relief—and yet, government tax receipts continue to grow. Therefore, let’s give Virginia families relief on the most hated tax in America since the tax on tea—the local car tax,” Youngkin said.

“Under my amendment, a family of four will be fully reimbursed with the Middle Class Car Tax Credit—a permanent, refundable, income tax credit, with a refundable income tax credit of up to \$150 for individuals earning under \$50,000 a year and up to \$300 for joint filers with under \$100,000 in annual income. The cost of the middle-class Car Tax Credit will be covered for the first 3 years with a \$1.1 billion deposit into a car tax relief fund.”

He continued discussing his plans for tax relief. “Virginia has an incredible hospitality, restaurant and service industry. Hardworking Virginians should keep every penny of the tips they earn through their exceptional service. My proposal is very simple, no more taxes on tips. You earn it, you keep it. This reduces taxes on Virginians by \$70 million a year.”

Youngkin then advocated for making the current Virginia standard deduction permanent. “Currently, the existing standard deduction of \$8,500 for single individuals and \$17,000 for joint filers,

is set to expire on Jan. 1, 2026. Failure to make the standard deduction permanent prior to that would result in tax increases of \$557 million in fiscal year 2026, and \$1.2 billion in fiscal year 2027. My friends, there is no reason to raise taxes on Virginians.”

“These steps will make our Commonwealth even more business-friendly, give hard working Virginians relief from the sting of inflation from these past few years and demonstrate clearly what is possible when we work together,” Youngkin said.

“To keep Virginia winning for families, we must continue to press forward on what has been the most aggressive education-funding agenda in the history of the Commonwealth,” the governor continued. “With the amendments I am offering today, which total to an additional \$1 billion—our shared commitment to K-12 public education will exceed \$22 billion over the biennium.”

Youngkin then elaborated on each area of education that would be receiving funding under his amendments, including \$290 million for school construction and modernization, \$550 million in direct aid, \$6.8 million for school resource officers and school security officers, \$50 million for schools that need help per the state’s school performance framework, and \$110 million for English language learners.

Youngkin also explained his opposition for a new \$50 million Virginia Opportunity Scholarship Program that will support 10,000 students “from families at or below twice the federal limit

to qualify for free school meals, will be eligible to apply for a \$5,000 grant each year to support their educational needs—tuition, uniform, books, supplies, fees and transportation—for an education at any private school in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Youngkin additionally reinforced his commitment to restore the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program. “I am proposing an additional \$120 million, \$60 million each year, to allow our heroes and their families to pursue their educational dreams at Virginia schools.”

Youngkin then turned to the topic of higher education. “Virginia is internationally recognized for our great universities and colleges. The cost of attending those institutions has grown too much, too quickly for Virginians,” Youngkin said.

“Together, we have increased funding for higher education to levels not seen since the Great Recession. And while we have included nearly \$500 million in capital funds for higher ed, my amendments include no new operating funding for our colleges and universities and include a 2.5% cap on tuition increases.”

Youngkin also acknowledged the \$25 million of incremental lab school partnership funding set aside for use by Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

“To keep Virginia winning, we must continue to strengthen Virginia’s economy. To attract and train the best talent, my budget proposals this morning include an additional \$13.9 million in funding for nursing and nursing

recruitment and training programs; an additional \$35 million to fund high school dual enrollment and career and technical education.

“We must continue to back our law enforcement and drive safe communities. In the last few years, every state has become a border state, and violent crime has impacted Virginia families,” Youngkin continued. “That’s why I’m proposing that if any locality adopts a sanctuary practice ... they should lose their funding. I would ask us all to put our constituents ahead of those who commit violent crimes and are subject to an ICE Detainer Order.”

Youngkin then turned to the topic of mental health. “We will keep Virginia winning as we deliver for Virginians the need for behavioral health care. To date, we’ve invested \$1.4 billion in Right Help, Right Now, and it has transformed the way we are serving Virginians. They are getting the right help when they need it,” he said. “After a successful pilot in Southwest Virginia, we are now proposing to add \$35 million in funding to employ Special Conservators of the Peace, across the Commonwealth to transfer custody while individuals are awaiting placement for care, and this will immediately put law enforcement officers back to work.”

“At the heart of a winning Virginia, is a healthy Virginia.” Before concluding his address, Youngkin also spoke about his proposals for women’s health and Medicaid, environmental health, and government health. “My budget amendments

CONTINUED ON PAGE 25 »

## Inova hosts students to experience career roles

In mid-November the Loudoun School-Business Partnership sponsored the Job for a Day Program for high school juniors and seniors.

**COMMUNITY** For 22 years, Inova Loudoun Hospital has partnered with the Loudoun School-Business Partnership and has been involved with the Job for a Day program.

Over the course of two days, Inova Loudoun Hospital hosted over 70 students in a variety of departments including heart and vascular, ER, physical medicine and rehab, radiology, oncology/surgery, medical, laboratory, wound care, trauma services, respiratory therapy, chaplaincy, engineering, supply chain among others.

The Loudoun County School-Business Partnership's Job for a Day program allows juniors and seniors in all Loudoun County public high schools an opportunity to experience a career vocation of their choice.



The program functions as a job-shadowing arrangement between the students enrolled in it, and the businesses that generously open their doors to them. This allows students to envision themselves in career roles and see if the jobs that they have expressed interest



match their skills and ambitions. Ultimately, the program equips students with valuable insights to make more informed decisions about their future career paths.

## H. M. King George seeks loyal subjects to suppress rebellious colonists in America

His Majesty's 65<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot, a non-profit historical reenactment organization, is recruiting history buffs to portray British soldiers at reenactment events during the 250-year commemoration cycle of the American War for Independence.

**COMMUNITY** Major historical reenactment events will be held in the New England, Middle Atlantic, and Southern Atlantic states from 2025 to 2031.

The 2025 events will take place in Massachusetts. Reenactors also participate as extras in films and historical documentaries. Uniforms, accoutrements, and muskets will be provided.

Lieutenant Bernard Way and Sergeant Lloyd Harting in the above photo have been portraying British soldiers for 35 years and live in Virginia.

If interested in experiencing this living history role please contact Lloyd Harting at [hoya76@comcast.net](mailto:hoya76@comcast.net).



### PLANNING COMMISSION, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Myers (At-Large) said.

The first two recommendations concern a grandfathering resolution that would be effective if the Board chooses to ignore the Commission's denial resolution and pass the amendments anyway.

The Commission recommended establishing the Board's public hearing date as the effective date for the grandfathering resolution. This would mean that development applications submitted and formally accepted before the effective date would be reviewed under the current zoning ordinance.

Commissioner Mark Miller (Catoctin) opposed the grandfathering recommendations.

"I think grandfathering is a political decision, not a planning decision. In general, I don't believe it's our role to recommend how and when to adopt grandfathering," he said.

The third recommendation concerned adding footnotes to the General Plan to provide flexibility to already existing

data centers that would become subject to a special exception use. The Commission does not believe the Board intended to keep existing data centers from expanding.

Similarly, the fifth recommendation is that a footnote or future amendment provide specific criteria for when a special exception would not be required. The Commission thought the Board should prefer adding footnotes over pursuing another amendment through a Resolution of Intent to Amend (ROIA).

"The concern is today, when this gets approved, and you have an existing site plan and you need to plot that building and stuff. How do you do it?" Myers said. "This says that the Board should consider a future ROIA, which means it's not going to help anybody that's there now."

The fourth recommendation was that the Board add language to the proposed CPAM to provide guidance in evaluating data centers as conditional uses. Additionally, the Commission recommended that long-term language be added to

guide redevelopment of urban employment areas with already existing data centers.

The Commission's sixth recommendation supported proposed changes to place type maps of Goose Creek Club and Arcola area, but not to metro station areas.

The commissioners expressed that they would like to become involved earlier in the second phase of the data center zoning ordinance changes.

"We would hope that when we get into phase two—that is 14 months but we get it for a month, and it's through December again—that they would give us some substance time, so that we would have time to work with it," Myers said.

Ultimately, the commissioners voted to pass the resolution 6-2-1 with Commissioner Ad Barnes (Leesburg) and Chair Michelle Frank (Broad Run) opposed, and Commissioner Robin-Eve Jasper (Little River) absent.

"I don't think this is what the supervisors wanted. We told them, but they're going to do it the way they want to do

it," Barnes said.

Frank opposed her own motion, citing concerns over the grandfathering policy, guidance for further changes to the general plan, and criteria for when special exceptions would not be required. She said that adopting a list of specific criteria had created headaches with the 2019 General Plan as these criteria tend to either create loopholes or unattainable criteria.

"I think this use can be in harmony with other uses and our residents if it's done properly, but I just don't see this set of recommendations getting us where we need to be to create that harmony," she said. "I think it's a little too far to one side."

The other commissioners felt that they had to compromise on which of their concerns were expressed, but that it was a fair compromise.

"I think this is a good product. We could probably have come up with some better stuff if we had more leeway to do it," Myers said. "But I'm very pleased with the outcome of where we're at."

#### NETT STANDS FIRM, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

time of the update in the handbook, Nett had already met all criteria to run for election.

The updated handbook was distributed in July 2024 without prior notice to employees and was made available on the employee section of the town's website for their access. However, despite its availability, no effort was made to specifically inform Nett about the policy, which directly pertains to his election to Town Council.

It wasn't until the end of November that Nett was notified that it was his responsibility to read the updated handbook. This raises concerns about why such an important update was communicated so poorly, and why it was introduced just before his Council term was due to begin.

At the Dec. 10 Purcellville Town Council meeting, the Council entered into a closed-door session to consult with legal counsel about issues "related to a town employee serving as a Council Member."

No action was taken by the then council majority, which suggests that the Virginia Conflict of Interest and Ethics Advisory Council's determination that there is no overall conflict of interest for a public employee who also serves as an elected official, stands.

#### LCPL ANNOUNCES, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16

finalists in each.

Awards ceremonies featuring guest author Monica Bhide will be held Saturday, May 17, at Trailside Middle School located at 20325 Claiborne Parkway in Ashburn. The adult ceremony will take place at 3 p.m., and the ceremony for middle and high school participants will start at 4:30 p.m.

Winning stories will be made available in an eBook on the LCPL website.

"We revamped the program this year by combining the It's All Write contest for teens and the Write On contest for adults into one unified event," said Susan VanEpps, LCPL's Division Manager of Programming and Community Engagement. "Our goal is to create a more inclusive experience that's still tailored to the different age groups. We hope you join us in this commemoration of storytelling!"

For full details, visit [library.loudoun.gov/storycontest](http://library.loudoun.gov/storycontest).

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#### PARENT SUPPORT PROGRAM CON'T. FROM PAGE 19

County Department of Family Services - Family Engagement and Preservation Services office, 45201 Research Place, Suite 110, Ashburn. The dates of the next sessions are:

- Feb. 4 – April 8
- April 22 – June 24

For details about the program and to register, visit [loudoun.gov/ParentingWisely](http://loudoun.gov/ParentingWisely).

#### Parenting Wisely – Young Child Edition

The Parenting Wisely – Young Child Edition is available to Loudoun County families with a child between the ages of 3 - 11 that has had one or more of the following problems: interrupting on the phone, getting kids up and out

the door on time, acting out in public, homework and poor grades, conflict with other children/siblings, and/or getting ready for school.

Families may participate in multi-family group sessions. We work with families to help parents improve communication skills, use planned ignoring and self-talk, set realistic and consistent expectations, use assertive discipline and prompts/commands, and use non-directive play and mindfulness techniques.

#### Parenting Wisely – Young Child Edition is offered in English and Spanish.

The English language program is offered virtually for 5 weeks program on Thursdays, 6 - 7:30 p.m. The dates

for the next sessions are:

- Jan. 23 – Feb. 20
- March 20 – April 24
- May 15 – June 12

The Spanish language program is offered virtually for 5 weeks on Thursdays from 6 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. The dates for the next sessions are:

- Jan. 16 – Feb. 20
- March 6 - April 10

For details about the program and to register, visit [loudoun.gov/ParentingWisely](http://loudoun.gov/ParentingWisely). For more information on the youth and family support services offered by the Loudoun County Department of Family Services, visit [loudoun.gov/FamilyServices](http://loudoun.gov/FamilyServices) or send an email to [dfs@loudoun.gov](mailto:dfs@loudoun.gov).

#### LOUDOUN EXPANDING, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

recliners for people who may require an assessment lasting less than 24 hours, as well as urgent psychiatric care services. The new center is being constructed on Meadowview Court in Leesburg—with completion date of

2026.

The Board of Supervisors approved the construction cost and subsequently, the county received support totaling \$9.7 million from the federal and state governments, and regional grant awards.



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#### GROWTH FORECASTS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

Loudoun County includes commercial, nonprofit and government buildings. Through 2050, nonresidential space is forecasted to add 45.9 million square feet to the county's estimated 135.4 million square feet currently in place, a projected increase of 33.9%.

#### Resulting Demographic Forecasts

Comparing forecasts for 2025 to those for 2050, population is expected to grow by 88,732 people, or 20%. Comparatively, the population growth between 2010 and 2020 was nearly 109,000 people, or 35%. Households and housing units are each expected to grow by approximately 22%, while employment is forecasted to increase by 25%, adding 56,144 jobs.

The FIC, an advisory group established in 1992 to support the Board in long-term planning, based the recommendations on county staff analysis of anticipated future growth. The FIC reviews assumptions about future growth and capital facility needs to provide recommendations for use in long-range planning. Specifically:

- **Capital Facility Standards:** The type, acreage and size of future capital facilities, along with "triggers" based on population, population within a given age group, or geographic factors.
- **Capital Intensity Factors:** The dollar amount of the capital facilities impacted by type of residential unit and geographic location that is calculated using

county capital facility standards and demographic inputs. Capital Intensity Factors are used to assess the capital facilities impacts of new residential development and provide a guideline for proffer negotiations during residential rezonings.

- **Capital Needs Assessment:** The type and number of capital facilities needed over a ten-year planning period beginning at the end of the current six-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP). The FY 2029-2040 Capital Needs Assessment is online at [loudoun.gov/CNA](http://loudoun.gov/CNA).
- **Demographic, economic and financial data** that is used for demographic forecasts and for fiscal impact modeling. More information about the county's demographics and data is online at [loudoun.gov/demographics](http://loudoun.gov/demographics).

Detailed information about the Fiscal Impact Committee forecasts, including the complete guidelines, maybe found in the documents prepared for the Dec. 3, Board of Supervisors meeting:

- Read the Dec.3, staff report, 2024 Fiscal Impact Committee Guidelines (PDF)
- Read the Dec. 3, staff report, 2024 Capital Facility Standards (PDF)

More information about the Fiscal Impact Committee, including a link to the updated guidelines, may be found at [loudoun.gov/FiscalImpactCommittee](http://loudoun.gov/FiscalImpactCommittee).

#### MARSH, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

Immediately prior to joining Loudoun County, Marsh was a planner with the city of Frederick, MD. Her previous experience also includes planning in other jurisdictions in Maryland and property appraisal roles in Pennsylvania.

Marsh earned a master's degree in real estate development from the University of Maryland, a master's degree in library information science from the University of Pittsburgh and a bachelor's degree in geography from Shippensburg University.

#### FIRE & RESCUE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 21

graduating in this Explosives Detection Canine class; she now serves the Loudoun community as one of 125 ATF EDC teams nationwide. Zo joins the ranks of many EDC's that have previously served or are currently serving the LCFR FMO.

Learn more about the canine teams assigned to the LCFR FMO by visiting [www.loudoun.gov/808/Canine-Unit](http://www.loudoun.gov/808/Canine-Unit).



Flip through the pages of our newspapers online at [BlueRidgeLeader.com](http://BlueRidgeLeader.com)

# Employers invited to participate in Leesburg Career Expo

The Town of Leesburg's Department of Economic Development will host a career expo for students and recent graduates on Tuesday, Feb. 25. The event will take place at Loudoun County High School, 415 Dry Mill Road, in Leesburg, from 6 to 8:30 p.m.

Local businesses are encouraged to

apply by completing the registration form at [chooseleesburg.com/business-community/business-events](http://chooseleesburg.com/business-community/business-events). Registration is free, and priority will be given to ensuring diversity in opportunities for job seekers. Notifications of acceptance will be sent no later than Feb. 11.

The expo is a great opportunity to hire

local students and recent graduates to fill part-time, full-time, seasonal and intern positions.

For more information about the expo, please contact Economic Development Assistant Director Melanie Scoggins at [msscoggins@leesburgva.gov](mailto:msscoggins@leesburgva.gov) or 571-271-1206.

"LET'S KEEP VIRGINIA WINNING," CONTINUED FROM PAGE 22

this morning fully funds the official Medicaid and associated rate forecasts with over \$687 million and also include \$105 million for the Children's Services Act," the governor said.

"To keep protecting Virginia's natural resources, I'm proposing an incremental \$50 million for the Richmond Combined Sewer Overflow Project, \$17.4 million for additional wastewater, and \$26.3 million for Ag BMPs. And each time I have repeated my commitment to our Chesapeake Bay goals."

"Finally, to keep Virginians working for Virginians,

we must continue to drive efficiency and effectiveness in our state government," Youngkin added. "We're including over \$227 million in our budget to address Virginia's technology debt by advancing critical projects, including the Integrated Revenue Management System at TAX—Folks, we need to make sure we collect our taxes efficiently and effectively—and The Department of Education's Student Testing system, which needs a material overhaul. And we have also included \$20 million of IT security to protect Virginia's data."

Youngkin began wrapping up his speech by touching on the aftermath of Hurricane Helene in Southwest

Virginia. "In my amendments, I've included \$25 million from the general fund and \$100 million from non-general funds to establish a permanent Disaster Assistance Fund, a fund that would be administered by the Department of Housing and Community Development."

Youngkin concluded his speech in the same vein he began. "What we are doing is working. Virginia is soaring, so let's keep Virginia winning. We are now among the top states competing for jobs and opportunities. These budget amendments build on that success," he said. "We can collectively get this done."

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## DESIGN BUILD MAINTAIN

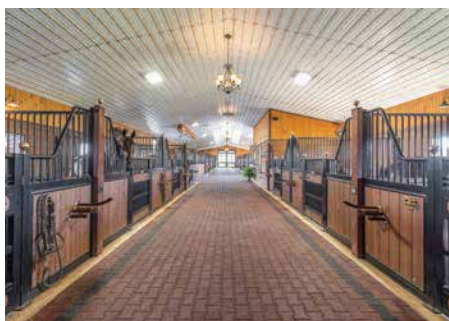
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# HISTORIC PREMIER EQUESTRIAN PROPERTY



Wheatland Farm is a landmark property offering unparalleled beauty, history, and equestrian excellence in the heart of Virginia's wine country. The 43-acre masterpiece stands as a beacon of equestrian luxury and historic prestige. Recognized as a USEF Center of Excellence, this property was the proud host of the 2018 Para Dressage Selection Trials for the World Equestrian Games. The state-of-the-art facilities include both indoor and outdoor arenas, a cross-country field, and an enclosed perimeter trail. Wheatland Farm's infrastructure provides two barns with twenty-six European-style stalls and all the luxury's one expects from a world-class equestrian experience. Overlooking a pristine 9-acre lake, the six-bedroom manor home (circa 1741) exudes timeless elegance. Discover a heated saltwater pool with spa, two charming guest homes, and a Carriage House, serving as an executive office. The historic Great Barn, seats 300 guests and offers an unrivaled venue for spectacular events. The Daniel Boone Cabin adds unique charm to the property. Thoughtfully designed, the farm is equipped with ramps and other features to accommodate individuals with disabilities. Only 30 minutes from Dulles International Airport and an hour from Washington, D.C.

15158 Berlin Turnpike, Purcellville, VA (Loudoun County)

Buyer registration is required prior to a showing appointment. \$11,500,000

Property Video  
Wheatland Farm



**Sam Fisher**

Principal Broker, Owner  
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