

# New coalition forms to demand change to data center industry

BY AUDREY CARPENTER

A group composed of more than 20 environmental, conservation, historic preservation, and climate advocacy groups, as well as community representatives and neighborhoods across the state, have formed a coalition calling for industry-wide data center reform.

The Virginia Data Center Reform Coalition will hold its first press conference Friday, Dec. 1 at 11 a.m., at the Clearbrook Center for the Arts, 2230 Tacketts Mill Dr. B, Lake Ridge in Prince William County. The coalition says it will demand accountability from the data center industry and share community

impacts from this type of development.

Cindy Sabato with the Piedmont Environmental Council wrote in an email, "The data center industry explosion in Virginia is bringing with it unprecedented energy infrastructure and other needs that will have far-reaching,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26 »



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**VOTED BEST OF LOUDOUN**

# Leesburg becomes hub for data centers

BY AUDREY CARPENTER

Digging has started at the Compass Creek retail center in Leesburg for what will become over the next two years two data centers located between the Ion International Training Center and the existing Microsoft campus.

One 387,300-square-foot data center and a second building with 222,000 square feet for data center and office

space use will be built north of the two existing Microsoft data centers - known as IAD01-1 and IAD01-2, which were built between 2019-2021.

The new, two-story data centers will sit directly across from Walmart and the Leesburg Executive Airport. STACK Infrastructure is building the data centers and has not disclosed who the user will be, though there are Microsoft

references in County site plans. Construction on the first of the two data centers is expected to be completed by late 2024.

In March, the Leesburg Town Council approved an agreement to provide water and sewer service to the data centers. "We have the available capacity in our utility system to serve more data center development and consider

the data center industry an evolving part of our business community," said Leesburg Mayor Kelly Burk in an email.

However, the utility service would only be used for office-type use and not incorporated into the data center cooling systems, the Town Council determined during a March meeting to review utility service and expansion needs.

Meanwhile, TA Realty, a Boston-based real estate investment firm, announced last month that it has signed a lease

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30 »



## Your hometown parade

Ready for a hometown parade Dec. 9? The Purcellville Parade starts at noon. Don't leave right after, as there are many festivities afterwards, as well as shopping at your favorite stores and eating at your favorite places!

The Loudoun Valley Community Center, located at 320 W

School Street in Purcellville, is offering an ornament workshop starting at 1 p.m.

Don't forget Santa will be at the Train Station from 2-5 p.m. and the address is 200 N 21st Street.

The Three Town Winter Get Down at Nostalgia Boutique in Purcellville, Elsass Home

Furnishings in Round Hill and the Hamilton Mercantile in Hamilton event goes from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Nostalgia is located at 142 E Main Street.

A holiday market and LEGO display will be located at the Bush Tabernacle from 1-6 p.m.



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L to R: Michael O'Brien, Eric and Michael Scott.

## Pack Rat Hauling – Takes away and gives back

BY LIZ TENNEY JARVIS

Giving back to the community is known to enrich not only the recipient but to the giver as well. This is true of local businesses who form a deep connection to their community and its citizens by donating, fundraising and helping out in any way they can. For the entire month of December, Pack Rat Hauling will be doing just that by donating a portion of their proceeds to the Purcellville Volunteer Fire Company.

Pack Rat Hauling, having been founded by local former firefighter Michael Scott, started this particular program last year when the Leesburg Fire Department received a percentage of their sales. Michael's brother, Eric Scott, indicates that after the success of last year's campaign, the decision was made to continue and improve on the fundraiser.

Eric said, "This is something we want to keep doing every year, around this time, around the holiday season." It's a great time of year for cleaning out and hauling away items as most attics/garages aren't sweltering hot. The trend of downsizing and those preparing for the holidays also make this a bustling business time for the company in its three locations: Purcellville, Leesburg and Winchester.

The Scott family is locally focused and Eric emphasizes how they are passionate about giving back. Reflecting on the volunteer fire departments, Eric said, "Life is busy for everybody so for those people (fire department volunteers) to give time out of their day – time away from their families – to do that is really incredible." Eric states that it is therefore their honor to donate to a fire department at least once a year, year after year.

Michael O'Brien, Public Information

Officer for the PVFC said, "The Purcellville Volunteer Fire Company appreciates the partnership with Pack Rat Hauling. PVFC is proudly celebrating our 100th year of service to the Purcellville and surrounding communities. As a volunteer organization we are reliant on our members and always in need of additional volunteers.

Their website is <http://www.purcellvillefire.org>, for information on becoming a member.

Volunteering has been important to the Scott family and they come by it naturally as Eric speaks of his mother, Jane Burnett, always being a huge advocate of helping within the community. Burnett helped start Mary's House of Hope and the first Tree of Life food pantry. Both of these being in Purcellville, the Scott children were right there helping with building, cleaning and helping their mother to pick up food donations from Giant.

Eric indicates that Pack Rat Hauling is constantly looking to do what they can and where they can pitch in to help out. They recently partnered with Caseco in order to put a free new roof on a Purcellville resident's house. Eric says, "we donated the containers for that project and again, being born and raised here, we are really passionate about giving back to our community that supports us all year long."

The Pack Rat Hauling fundraiser will run from December 1-31, 2023 with \$25 of the cost of every rented dumpster container going to the Purcellville Volunteer Fire Company. In addition to the donations, Pack Rat Hauling will be offering discounts and sales as indicated on their website. All of their services, packages and price information can be found online at [PackRatHauling.com](http://PackRatHauling.com), or by calling 540-454-0415.

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# Ask Dr. Mike

BY MICHAEL OBERSCHNEIDER, PSY.D.

Dr. Mike:

Our 16-year-old son is having a really hard time academically. He gets the occasional A, a lot of B's and some C's, and he doesn't apply himself at all. His grades are all over the place, and we never see him doing homework. With grade inflation within LCPS, we're worried that he's not learning, and he's just being pushed through.

He also misses quizzes and assignments, or he turns things in late. He does well socially and he's a great athlete, but his head is in the clouds when it comes to school.

All of this started before COVID, but it's gotten a lot worse during and after the pandemic, especially when the school system went to full time virtual learning. I truly don't think our son has read a book from cover to cover since 7th grade, which is obviously concerning for us.

My husband thinks our son just needs to be pushed harder with consequences, but I'm worried that he has

ADD, a learning problem, or depression or anxiety. Taking his phone or the car away isn't going to do anything if he has a larger underlying problem, right? What are your thoughts.

– Concerned Parent

Concerned Parent:

I appreciate your situation, and please know that you're not alone. As a child psychologist in private practice, I see child and teen boys and girls going through what your son is going through daily. To fix things you're going to need to be more proactively involved since your son likely isn't going to address things on his own.

## Ask Dr. Mike

By Michael  
Oberschneider, Psy.D.



Figuring out if your son's academic problems are due to something within his control or something beyond his control – ADD, emotional struggles or a learning problem – is essential, and the best way to determine that, is to increase structure.

Reviewing ParentVUE daily, sitting down and reviewing schoolwork across your son's academic subjects

daily, getting a tutor for his weaker subject areas, having him email and meet or check in with his teachers, are several ways to help him prioritize his academics.

I also recommend you incentive your son with a reward system for effort and better grades. You could pay him cash for hard work and grades, or if you don't want to do that, you could reward him with something he wants if his output and grades improve. I would stay away from consequences since you currently don't know if his academic struggles are completely within his control or not.

If, after a reasonable period of time, your son's academics don't improve with structured and consistently practiced interventions, his learning and academic struggles may be due to a larger underlying problem.

The next step would then be to have your son formally evaluated; a neuropsychological evaluation, comprised of standardized and objective measures, will identify possible diagnoses such as AD(H)D or executive functioning problems, a learning disorder or psychological conditions. Many parents are surprised by the amount of information neuropsychological testing can provide.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24 »

## Just like nothing (else) on earth: Austin Grove United Methodist Church

BY TIM JON

The place appeared to be sleeping, the last time I visited. And that was fine, as I'd driven from my home in Leesburg that morning – coming up through the Town of Middleburg and then on a series of unpaved roads – passing through the small community of Bloomfield on the way. You see, Austin Grove United Methodist Church technically lies within the historic jurisdiction of Bluemont – which is centered even further to the west, literally at the side of the Blue Ridge Mountains.



If you've lived here for awhile, you get to know the territory. I had delivered mail to this address for a couple of years, off-and-on, prior to procuring my 'own route' based in and around Purcellville (hey, Faulkner wrote primarily about one rural county, so can I).

The stops along Route 739 – Austin Grove Road – always seemed to lie several miles beyond the end of the earth

– this portion of the delivery following assignments on the heights of the Blue Ridge, and then more down in the valleys of either side.

By the time I reached the little stone Church, I usually felt as if I'd been held upside down, shaken vigorously, and then thrown into a clothes dryer for a full cycle. If you've never had the pleasure of operating a Postal delivery truck, just imagine the most aggressive amusement park ride over a four-hour period. So, I was always happy to see this historic house of worship, as if waiting to offer comfort, out in these hinterlands.

After delivering the church mail, you'd retrace your way back down Austin Grove Road, hitting Ridgeside Road, Trappe Road, Greengarden – yikes, the list continues so far we don't have time to go the whole way. Suffice it to say: this was a pleasant little oasis amidst the day's assignment of 60-odd miles. Sometimes very odd.

But those days are past, and I now needed to travel to this spot on my own



time, most recently on a pleasant Sunday morning. I'm not sure if services were planned for later in the day, but I seemed to have the grounds entirely to myself, for an easy stroll around the building to gather some images for part of the story.

As I completed my tour and returned to the western side of the structure, I noticed the lighting effects of the sun's rays peeking through the opposite side, and visible from my position. It didn't take much imagination to conjure up the thought that the church sanctuary was lit from within.

The colors, to one who's partially colorblind, I know, appeared to contain hues of yellow and orange, and evidently sprang from indiscernible objects on the inside. You see, all the times I'd driven within several yards of the building itself, in all types of weather and lighting conditions, I'd never enjoyed this trick of lighting. It wasn't until I made a deliberate visit to the historic facility that I noticed the phenomenon – no doubt produced by the angle of the sun, the placement of the church windows and the items inside producing the amber-like glow.

Now, the Austin Grove United Methodist Church enjoys quite a history on

CONTINUED ON PAGE 27 »



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# Police Chief gives 100-day report to Town Council

BY AUDREY CARPENTER

New Leesburg Police Chief Thea Pirnat submitted her 100-day report to the Leesburg Town Council in November which assessed the department's professional, operational, administrative, management and interagency coordination effectiveness, along with crime patterns, public information and community outreach efforts.

The assessment was conducted from July 24, when she began her new role, through Nov. 1. Prior to starting with the Leesburg Police Department, she was with the Fairfax County Police Department for 23 years. She replaced LPD Police Chief Gregory Brown who retired in December 2022.

A copy of the report can be viewed under the Council Meeting Packets tab for Nov. 13-14, 2023: <https://www.leesburgva.gov/government/mayor-council/council-documents-legislation>.

Chief Pirnat spent the first 100 days gathering information about the LPD from police and Town employees, public safety partners, stakeholders, community members, and available internal data. The report provides data related to staffing demographics, attrition and vacancy rates, crimes and calls for service, officer productivity, and projected staffing needs.

The report outlines some immediate changes that have been made to policy, equipment, special programs, and to general LPD administration, and additionally provides information related to compensation and benefits for consideration by the Town's administration.

The LPD currently has 87 sworn positions and 22 non-sworn positions. Sworn positions include command, patrol, K9, detectives, training, recruiting, school resource officers, traffic, and property and evidence. Non-sworn positions include dispatch, records, accreditation, information technology, and crime analyst, according to the report.

In 2021 and 2022, the LPD department lost 30 sworn officers from its force, but was able to make up for that loss by hiring 25 new officers between 2022-2023. There are six recruits in the current academy class scheduled for graduation this month, with another five hired for the class starting in January 2024, the report said.

Upon graduation, recruits spend four months in field training and securing additional certifications with both classroom and scenario-based training. The LPD won't feel the impact of the graduating officers until April 2024 and

October 2024 because upon completion of their post-academy training, the new officers will still need the support and guidance of more senior officers and supervisors, the report indicated.

The LPD would like to recruit more female police officers and has committed to signing the 30x30 Pledge with a Spring 2024 Cohort to commit to having 30% female recruits in police academies by the year 2030.

Patrol operations have been impacted heavily with vacancies at a 32% vacancy rate. This required the abolishment of the evening shift which has led to officers working 12-hour shifts. Chief Pirnat said the LPD plans to return to three patrol shifts as staffing permits.

The LPD has added sworn and non-sworn positions with the growth of the Town's population over decades, but the increase has not kept up with previous ratios of sworn officers as compared to the number of residents. The ratio of sworn officers per 1,000 residents has steadily decreased over the last couple of decades, she said.

Chief Pirnat cited a 2019 U.S. Department of Justice Report which reported the average ratio of sworn officers per 1,000 residents at 2.4 nationally. The LPD is currently at 1.78 officers per 1,000 based on a population size of 48,908. To meet the national average, LPD sworn officers would need to increase from 87 to 117, and non-sworn staffing from 22 to 50 positions.

When examining the first three quarters of 2023, the LPD stands to be projected at 20.8% higher on criminal calls, 18.5% higher on service type calls, and 33.1% higher on traffic type calls as compared to the average of the previous three years, Chief Pirnat explained.

However, if the calls for service for 2023 trend at the current rate, then 2023 will also be higher than just 2022 call volume, which no longer has the same pandemic effect of the previous years. Criminal calls would still be up 8.1%, service calls up 23.1%, and traffic calls are up 54.3%.

"Traffic complaints are one of the most often voiced concerns of community members," Chief Pirnat stated. The nearly 3,000 warnings issued so far this year is double all of 2022 and 55% over the three-year average.

In the Traffic Unit, two of the five positions are vacant and another officer will retire this month. Despite the staffing shortage, the department has seen an increase in the number of citations, warnings, and DWI arrests this year.

The LPD will pursue grant funding opportunities for the addition of an

in-house Victim Advocate fulltime position to support providing services for victims of domestic assault and sexual violence.

In 2024, the LPD will better track shoplifting to not only include the total number of incidents and the location, but also the total dollar value of reported loss, the total dollar value recovered through law enforcement investigation/intervention, and the category of items being stolen, Chief Pirnat said.

The LPD will better track overdose data as it pertains to victim demographics and incidents in the schools to help with early identification and possible public information campaigns.

An indoor firearms training facility complete with a classroom, gun cleaning room, and indoor plumbing should be added to the Town's Capital Improvement Plan, the report indicated.

The LPD would like to have the patrol

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22 »

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# Faithful stewards of Catoctin Meadows wetlands fight to protect its natural beauty

BY RON RISE SR.

On the northwest edge of the Town of Purcellville quietly rests a 14.2 acre-green open space with forested wetlands with life-giving waters of the South Fork Catoctin Creek, all nestled quietly along N 21st Street.

In 1996, Bruce Brownell approached the Town of Purcellville during the design and development of his Catoctin Meadows subdivision. Mr. Brownell offered to transfer ownership of a 14.2-acre property to the Town, along with an undisclosed cash contribution.

The Town Council debated the offer at length but in the end decided the Town did not have the financial capital at that time to maintain or fund the fiscal obligations required for the property.

The now-orphaned forested wetlands – along with its life-giving creek – was deeded to the care of 74 Catoctin Meadows

Homeowners Association families. As time went on, the members became caring owners of the wetlands and creek by simply allowing the land and wildlife to thrive without further human interference and damage.

However, just one decade later, the Town Parks and Recreation Advisory Board developed a master plan that identified this land's enormous value to the Town.

On Oct. 10, 2006, at the direction of Mayor Bob Lazaro and his Town Council, Town Manager Robert Lohr wrote to the HOA board. In his request, Lohr discussed the Town's desire to acquire the HOA's 14.2-acre private space and incorporate it into the Town's existing Suzanne Kane Nature Park.

Twelve days later, on Oct. 24, the HOA Board President replied stating, "The HOA members are strongly opposed to a transfer of their land to the Town."

This HOA rebuttal was not taken as final by the Town Parks and Recreation Committee, which continued to push its newly weighted influence back onto the HOA. The committee promised this would help gain better easements for



sidewalks, as well as signage on and throughout the HOA land. They even suggested the Town might spin off a separate Town 501c3 to obtain the land from the HOA.

On Oct. 27, in response to the Town's continued push, the HOA President responded again, this time directly to Vice Mayor Greg Wagner, "Why such urgency? The lands are already wildlife space."

"Trails (paved or otherwise), benches and signs will only diminish the wildlife value of the land, driving off small woodland creatures and diminishing its ecological value," he added. "Old Dominion Valley town trails are reported to have been misused by underage drinkers and vandals and the Catoctin Meadows HOA have no desire for that."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28 »

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## Election 2023

BY CHARLES HOUSTON

No more candidate mailers clogging my mailbox. No more questionable ads on social media. No more candidate photos popping up when I use Google.

### Rejoice

Yes, be happy those irritants are gone, but rejoicing at the election results is up to your opinion about the results. The most notable thing is that our Board of Supervisors will be basically unchanged, with the exception that Laura Tekrony replaces the retiring Tony Buffington. While they represent different political parties, they give similar, strong support to rural conservation.

Before I get into the election results, I'll follow-up to something I wrote in an earlier Op-Ed.

### Loudoun's Future, Inc.

I had mentioned rumors that a western Loudoun PAC was being organized. (A Political Action Committee, as most of you know, gathers donations and then makes targeted contributions to political candidates.) The rumor was correct

and the new PAC is called Loudoun's Future. My friend John Lovegrove is its Chairman and in a recent phone call, he laid out the PAC's objectives, "We want to protect Loudoun from sprawl and congestion caused by too much development, advocate for agriculture and our rural roads, protect the mountains and countryside," he said.

I accused him of reading from the PAC's brochure. "Yep," said John. "I confess. There's one thing in the brochure that need emphasizing. The main one is data centers, and we'll be involved in mitigating the issues they bring. For example, while we like data center tax revenue, they also irritate a lot of citizens for a lot of reasons. We want to help protect the quality of life in the entire county."

Lovegrove went on, "One thing that distinguishes Loudoun's Future is that we don't just mail a check to a candidate and pat ourselves on the back. We are in it for the long haul, building good relationships with individual Supervisors and being a resource for them."

I asked him what that meant.

"The Board is constantly dealing with controversial issues. We will do more than just gripe. We'll propose solutions. We'll advocate as needed but we are something of a think tank. Maybe a think tank that also advocates."

Lovegrove saw my puzzled expression and elaborated. "We have a lot of firepower. Our members have had significant private sector experience for both large organizations and start-ups. Some of us have big-time consulting experience. Others are skilled at law, real estate, finance, conservation easements, the cyber world, community conservation and so on."

I nodded.

He added one more thing, "It's easy to complain about something, but we want to produce solutions, and spell out how to achieve them."

### The Board of Supervisors Races

You cannot ignore the power of incumbency. Money helps but does not guarantee success, and the quality of a candidate matters a great deal. Statisticians use a tool – regression analysis – to figure out what inputs are most closely tied to certain outputs. Here, they would try to determine whether

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28 »



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## No to big lattice towers through western Loudoun

Dear Editor:

Loudoun's growing data center industry needs more power than the electric power utilities can provide with current infrastructure. As a result, the regional power industry consortium, PJM, is considering a package of proposals to expand the high voltage transmission line network (link to a 27 MB file) in order to bring additional power into Loudoun County.

**LETTER**

Most of the proposals involve using or expanding existing rights-of-way, but one path (Project 853) involves a new right-of-way for a 510-kilo-volt (kV) power line (big lattice towers like those near River Creek) that would cut diagonally through western Loudoun as well as navigating a complicated, winding path through the center of



the county, including along Rt.7.

The exact path has not been determined at this point, but the western Loudoun agricultural zone and wine district would be bisected and many historic homes would be devalued by this massive power line.

PJM's Transmission Expansion Advisory Committee on Dec. 5 will meet in Audubon, Pennsylvania to make the final selection of proposals to be considered on Dec.11 by the PJM Board.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30 »

## An open letter to Aaron Spence, Ph.D., Superintendent, Loudoun County Public Schools

Dear Dr. Spence,

I have learned of your "listening" sessions you are hosting at all the schools in Loudoun County. I wish to speak up; I hope you are listening.

LGBTQ issues do not belong in the public schools. This is a private matter between the child and the child's parents. The only reason for the schools to be involved in such issues would be to protect both biological girls and boys transitioning.

**LETTER**

A boy transitioning to a girl must not do so at the detriment of girl's privacy, safety and dignity. There is no dignity when our girls are forced to undress in front of a boy who is transitioning. In addition, transgender girls should be directed to alternate bathrooms, alternate locker rooms and sports for transgenders.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30 »

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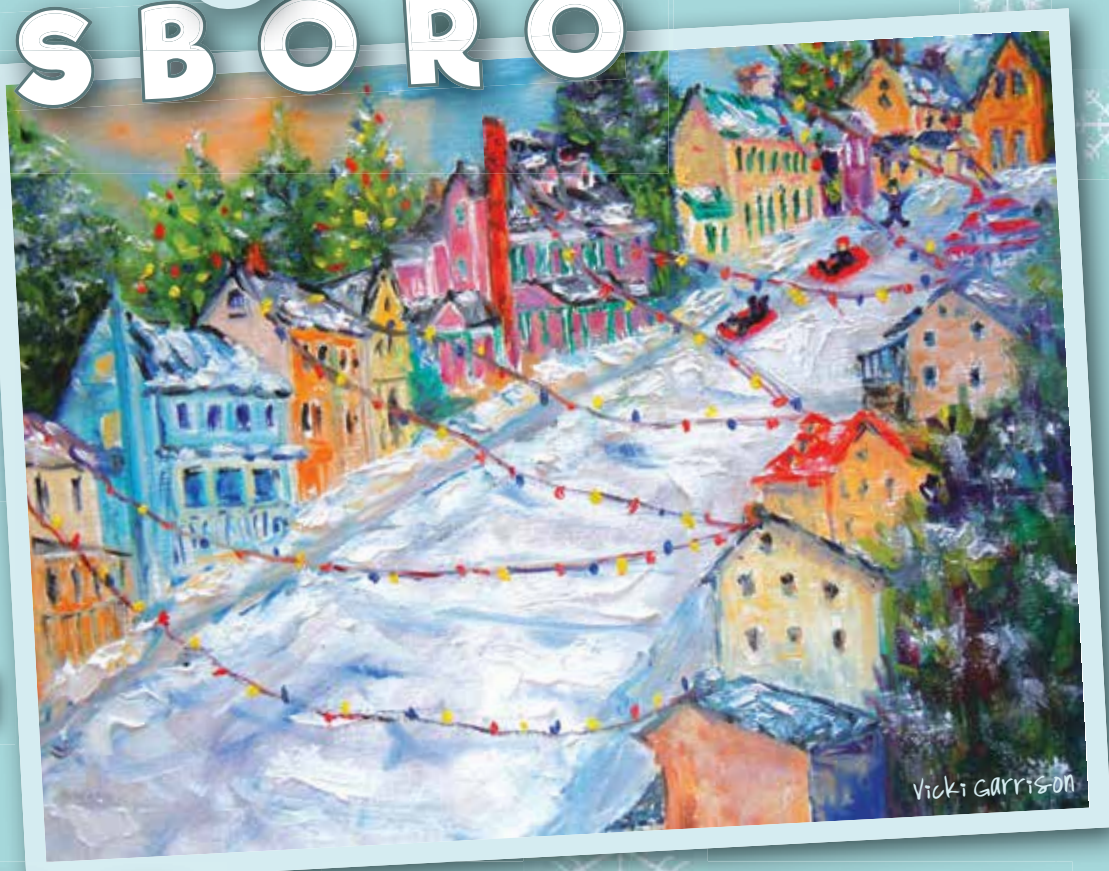
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## SAT. DEC. 2

### Town Tree Lighting

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*5 p.m. at the Old Stone School*

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**6:30 – 8:30 p.m.**

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## General Fund Revenues remain in line with forecasts through October

Gov. Glenn Youngkin has announced that general fund revenues for October 2023 remain in line with updated revisions to the official revenue forecast. Year-to-date through Oct. 31, general fund revenues are up 12.1 percent over the prior year.

The year-over-year increase is driven largely by elevated non-withholding collections and lower-than-expected individual income tax refunds related to the elective Pass-Through Entity Tax, while other major revenue sources were generally in line with expectations.

“Our prudent forecast for this fiscal year appropriately reflected the economic risks on the horizon,” said Youngkin. “While we are slightly ahead of plan, year-to-date performance reinforces that we must remain measured as decisions at the federal level continue to drive inflation. We must continue our efforts to address the cost of living for all Virginians and drive job growth across the Commonwealth.”

“While PTET-related collections and refunds continue to distort overall revenue collections, underlying revenue growth in our major revenue sources such as payroll withholding and sales tax is roughly on plan,” said Secretary of Finance Stephen Cummings.

“We are confident in our conservative revenue forecast that reflects moderating revenue growth over the balance of the fiscal year, and we are carefully watching a number of economic headwinds, including the possibility of a federal government shutdown, persistently high interest rates, and spillover effects from the military operations in Gaza and the economic slowdown in China. Given these downside risks, we will maintain a cautious outlook going forward.”

Among the major revenue sources, payroll withholding taxes were 2.6 percent higher for the month on an unadjusted basis and up 1.0 percent year-to-date through October. Sales tax collections are 0.3 percent higher year-to-date, and corporate income tax revenues are up 24.4 percent year-to-date.

Adjusting for policy and excluding PTET-related refunds to better reflect underlying economic growth, total general fund revenues decreased 5.3 percent year-over-year in October and are up 1.8 percent year-to-date. For the full fiscal year, the official revenue forecast anticipates a year-over-year decline in general fund revenues of 5.5 percent, including the impact of various tax policy actions adopted in 2022 and 2023, and reflecting the potential for an economic slowdown in the latter part of the current fiscal year.

## BOS meeting schedule for December

The Loudoun County Board of Supervisors has made adjustments to its schedule of meetings in December 2023.

The Transportation and Land Use Committee meeting originally scheduled for Dec. 20, has been rescheduled to Monday, Dec. 18, at 5 p.m., and will now be held in the Dulles Room at the Government Center.

The Joint Board of Supervisors and School Board Committee meeting scheduled for Monday, Dec. 11, has been canceled.

The Board will host its annual meeting with Virginia legislators on Dec. 2 at 4:30 p.m.

The Board’s complete schedule is posted online at [loudoun.gov/calendar](http://loudoun.gov/calendar).

The Board of Supervisors’ meetings are held at the Loudoun County Government Center, 1 Harrison St. SE in Leesburg. The Board’s business meetings and public hearings are available for viewing on television on Comcast Government Channel 23 and Verizon FiOS Channel 40 and are livestreamed at [loudoun.gov/meetings](http://loudoun.gov/meetings).

The Board of Supervisors’ meeting agendas and meeting documents are posted online at least three days in advance of the meeting at [loudoun.gov/bosdocuments](http://loudoun.gov/bosdocuments).



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# Exploring speed cameras in Leesburg school zones

## Study finds 38% of drivers speed in school areas

BY AUDREY CARPENTER

Leesburg Police Chief Thea Pirnat has requested the Leesburg Town Council consider piloting speed cameras within some Town school zones for enhanced safety after adopting an appropriate ordinance and further research into all vendor options.

Other jurisdictions in the region with the speed cameras already in place include Alexandria City, Arlington County, Falls Church, Manassas Park, Fairfax City, and Fairfax County.

In a report prepared for the Council, Town staff concurred, recommending the Council consider adopting an ordinance, identifying a vendor, and hiring a police officer for the pilot program which would operate within a limited number of school zones. The Town would need to adopt an ordinance for civil penalties to

be paid to the jurisdiction.

One of the objectives of the pilot program would be to increase safety for students traveling to and from school zones by bike or foot. The Code of Virginia Section 46.2-873 sets the speed limit at 25 mph in school zones, and there are 13 school zones in Leesburg.

School crossing zones are defined as an area located within the vicinity of a school at or near a highway where the presence of children on such school property or going to and from school reasonably requires a special warning to motorists. Zones are marked and operated with appropriate warning signs or other traffic control devices indicating that a school crossing is in progress.

Chief Pernat said the Leesburg Police Department recently partnered with a vendor to provide a speed study within three school zones to evaluate the need for cameras. The locations evaluated were Cool Spring Elementary School, Tolbert Elementary School, and Harper Park Middle School on Oct. 2 and 3.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 25 >

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# Human Services Nonprofit grant application process is open

Loudoun County's annual grant application process for community nonprofit organizations is now open with the Fiscal Year 2025 Human Services Nonprofit Grant Application available at loudoun.gov/nonprofitgrants.

### GOVERNMENT

Nonprofits certified as 501(c)3 organizations that provide human services to Loudoun County residents in the areas of need identified and approved by the Board of Supervisors for FY 2025 are eligible to apply for funding. The areas of need are:

- Crisis Intervention and Diversion: Services provided to individuals

and families in crisis to overcome immediate problems and reduce or prevent the need for more restrictive and expensive higher-level services.

- Improved Quality of Human Services: Services and opportunities provided to individuals, organizations and communities that enhance the quality, accessibility, accountability, and coordination of services provided by community organizations.
- Long-Term Support: Services that focus on assisting individuals

who have continuing, long-term support needs to remain healthy, safe, and independent in the community.

- Prevention and Self-Sufficiency: Services focused on assisting individuals and families in becoming and/or remaining independent and stable, and providing tools, skills, strategies and resources to individuals and families.

Applications must be submitted by 4 p.m., Thursday, Dec. 21. The amount of funding for FY 2025 will be determined by the Board of Supervisors as part of the

county's adopted FY 2025 budget. In FY 2024, the budget for human services nonprofit grant funding was \$2.3 million.

### Funding Options

Loudoun County has two options for organizations seeking local tax funds through the FY 2025 Human Services Nonprofit Grant process:

- The standard nonprofit grant application process for organizations seeking awards of \$5,001 - \$113,000; organizations will be awarded proportional funding.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28 »



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# Loudoun Cares to administer emergency eviction relief program

As of Nov. 20, and ending Jan. 31, 2024, eligible Loudoun County residents may apply for emergency eviction assistance by submitting an online pre-screening application through the nonprofit Loudoun Cares.

### GOVERNMENT

The program has been commissioned by the Board of Supervisors as part of the county's efforts to distribute available funds from the American Rescue Plan Act to address lingering economic impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The county is using a portion of the available funds for various housing programs, including one that is intended to

keep eligible residents who are facing immediate eviction in their homes—particularly during the cold weather months—by paying outstanding rent obligations and fees associated with the eviction process.

Loudoun has allocated \$500,000 for this one-time, emergency assistance program, which includes a contract with Loudoun Cares to administer the program. The number of households that will receive assistance will vary based on several factors. Loudoun Cares will sign up and recommend financial assistance for as many households as possible. The county will make payments directly to

landlords on behalf of approved applicants. The program will end by Jan. 31, 2024, or sooner if funds are exhausted.

### Who is Eligible to Apply for Assistance?

Individuals and families must meet specific criteria to be considered eligible for the eviction assistance program. All applicants must:

- Live in Loudoun County.
- Rent their homes and have a valid current lease.
- Earn less than 80 percent of the Area Median Income.
- Hold a current Eviction Summons (for Unlawful Detainer).
- Be impacted by COVID-19-related

economic factors.

In addition, the applicant's landlord must provide an IRS W-9 form and agree to participate in the program.

### How to Apply for Assistance

Eligible residents can submit an online pre-screening application for assistance to Loudoun Cares. All applicants must complete the online pre-screening application to verify eligibility.

The online application is available in English and Spanish. Eligible residents should visit [loudouncares.org/eviction](http://loudouncares.org/eviction) to submit the online application.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22 »

# Food waste composting drop-off center opens at landfill

Loudoun County has begun a one-year pilot program for accepting food waste at its new Food Waste Composting Drop-Off Center located at the Loudoun County landfill. The program is intended for residents who are interested in composting their household food scraps such as fruits and vegetables, meats, dairy products, pasta, eggshells and coffee grounds. Quantities accepted are limited to one 5-gallon container or an equivalent amount, per customer, per week.

## GOVERNMENT

Under the pilot program, Key Compost will collect the material for processing at its composting facility in Frederick, Maryland.

The program was recently initiated by the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors in an effort to create local composting opportunities for the community. Results of the pilot program, including the level of public interest, will be evaluated for possible program expansion to additional locations.

Diverting food waste from disposal for composting benefits the environment in

several ways, including providing nutrient-rich material to improve soil health, reducing waste and reducing methane emissions from landfills.

The Loudoun County Energy Strategy, approved by the Board in February 2023, calls for the county to expand the yard waste composting and recycling program to divert solid waste from the landfill to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

In September 2023, the landfill began offering free compost to residents made from yard waste, such as grass clippings, hedge clippings and leaves.

The food waste composting drop-off center is located at the Landfill Recycling Center at the Loudoun County Solid Waste Management Facility, 21101 Evergreen Mills Road in Leesburg. Operating hours are Monday through Saturday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. More information about the services available at the landfill may be found at [loudoun.gov/landfill](http://loudoun.gov/landfill).

Visit [loudoun.gov/recycle](http://loudoun.gov/recycle) for more information about the food waste composting program or call 703-771-5500.

## Leesburg Town Council considers 4.1% annual water and sewer increase

The Leesburg Town Council held a meeting Nov. 28 at Town Hall to receive public input as the Council considers a 4.1% water and sewer increase for homeowners that if passed would go into effect July 1, 2024.

A vote to amend the Town Code to establish new water and sewer charges and make necessary amendments is anticipated after public input.

At the Nov. 14 Council meeting, NewGen Strategies and Solutions LLC, an energy, solid waste and water consultant based in Richardson, Texas recommended the increase. The company was hired by the Town to conduct a water and sewer study.

The new five-year utility rate plan and associated fees are based on three main guiding principles:

- The water and sewer enterprise fund

must be financially self-supporting and does not use tax dollars.

- The utility fund should maintain adequate reserves for contingencies, emergencies, and unplanned expenses in order to maintain a safe and reliable water and sewer system.
- Water and sewer rates should adequately cover the cost of service, system monitoring, maintenance, and infrastructure renewal and replacement to ensure regulatory compliance.

Increases in sewer costs are primarily attributed to work that has been identified at the Water Pollution Control Facility to accommodate additional solids processing and nutrient removal facilities in compliance with Federal regulatory requirements.

## Silver Line Metrorail, bus services in operation for a year

One year ago, Loudoun County Transit phased in the largest update to its bus system in over a decade in concert with the opening of the Metrorail's Silver Line extension, which includes the Dulles International Airport, Loudoun Gateway and Ashburn Metro stations in Loudoun County, and Innovation Center, Herndon and Reston Town Center in Fairfax County.

The Silver Line bus service currently runs 21 bus routes and has 156 bus stops, improving overall service to and from Silver Line Metrorail stations. To date, the Silver Line bus routes have provided service for over 72,000 passengers.

In October 2023, a major milestone was reached with Metrorail service topping one million customers at the Dulles Airport Metrorail Station since the Silver Line extension opened. The six new Silver Line stations have provided service to more

than three million riders during that time, according to figures from the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority and the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority.

### How to Use Silver Line Metrorail and Bus Services in Loudoun

Here are four things to know about using Silver Line Metrorail and Bus services in Loudoun:

- Three Stations: Loudoun County has three Metrorail stations: Ashburn, Loudoun Gateway and Washington Dulles International Airport. More information about each station, including video tours, may be found at [loudoun.gov/silverlinestations](http://loudoun.gov/silverlinestations).
- Metro Parking: Need to park your car or bike before you hop on a train? The Metro parking garages

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26 »



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# Three Town Winter Get Down event – Dec. 9

The temps are falling but the events in some of our western towns are hot. On Dec. 9 retailers in Purcellville, Hamilton, and Round Hill have partnered up for the Three Town Winter Get Down featuring vendors, wine tastings, and much more.

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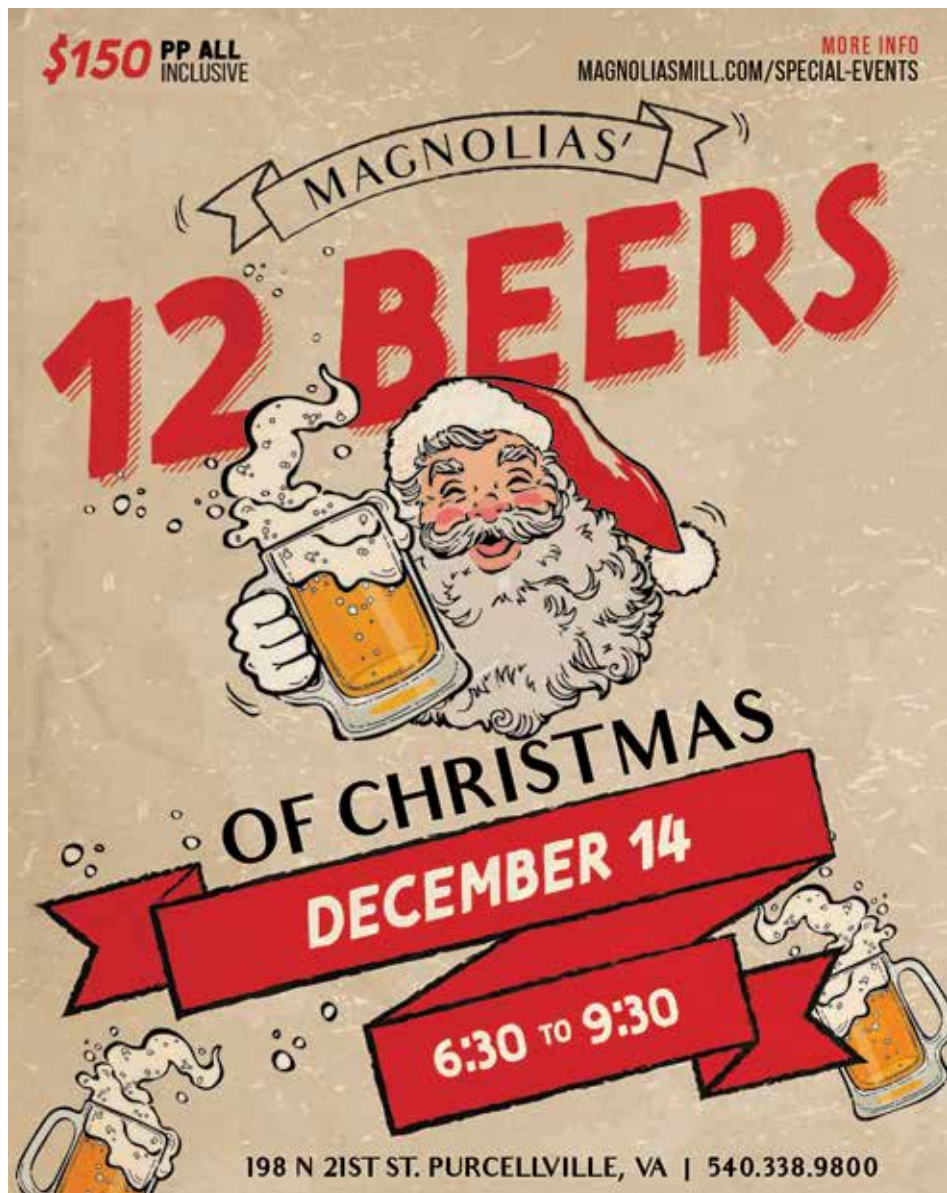
“We have to give people more

reasons to come to our area, instead of just showing up for one shop and leaving,” says Silas Redd, owner of Nostalgia Boutique and planner for the Three Town Winter Get Down. “It all translates into the longer people are in the area, the more money they will spend at shops, restaurants, and possibly overnight accommodations.”

Bonjour. For a little “Ooh la la,” Elsass Home Furnishings will represent the Round Hill area. Featuring imported antique furniture and home décor from France, Elsass will offer shoppers 20% off their purchases and have wines from Williams Gap Vineyards. Consultant for Elsass, Kathryn Kwiatkowski says, “Walking into Elsass is like being transported to another location in another time. Adding a piece of history to your home is a great way to make it feel more lived in and comfortable.”

If you’re looking for healthy, organic options, The Hamilton Mercantile is the spot for you. Located in Hamilton, this shop will be featuring drink

CONTINUED ON PAGE 27 »




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# Loudoun's Quilt of Faith – Leesburg's Congregation Sha'are Shalom

BY RABBI NEIL TOW, CONGREGATION SHA'ARE SHALOM, LEESBURG

Eighteen years ago, Congregation Sha'are Shalom (CSS), first known as Loudoun Jewish Congregation, dedicated its home on Evergreen Mills Road in Leesburg. In December, the congregation will celebrate this milestone with a rededication during Chanukah.

While most organizations celebrate at the decades, the number eighteen is significant in Jewish tradition since it is represented numerically in Hebrew by the word chai, meaning "life." Chai—life—is about spirit, vitality, hope, and joyfulness. Pictures from our ceremonial transfer of the Torah scrolls to the new building now appear in an exhibit at the Capitol Jewish Museum in Washington, D.C.

Chanukah, the holiday that marks the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem after it had been purposely destroyed and defiled by Syrian-Greeks, will be an especially meaningful moment this year as the congregation gathers to reflect upon and renew its commitment to building connections with God, our tradition, our Jewish community here and around the world, and

strengthen relationships with the diverse communities which call Loudoun home.

Following a Skype interview from Jerusalem where my wife and I were studying for the year from 2004 to 2005, I came to CSS as the second-to-last of a group of student rabbis who served the congregation on a part time basis while continuing my seminary studies.

It was wonderful to reconnect with synagogue members whom I had met back then when I came on full time three years ago. My mentor, Rabbi Leonard Cahan, of blessed memory, was an inspirational and enthusiastic teacher, and I endeavor to share my love of Jewish tradition in the same animated and interactive way he did. Every week we find new insights in the weekly Torah portion, and our adult b'nai mitzvah students find uplift when they can read, understand, and chant a Hebrew prayer on their own for the first time.

We support our greater Loudoun community with acts of loving kindness. We took an inspiring trip to Israel last June with many who were traveling there for the first time. CSS serves at a local shelter on a monthly basis and takes an active role

in the annual Thanksgiving interfaith program held at Rust Library.

I serve as one of the chaplains for the Leesburg Police Department and as a volunteer for spiritual care at our local Inova hospital. Our education programs, which start with preschool and continue through high school, strengthen students' faith and build leadership skills. We join congregations all over the region every spring for Good Deeds Day, a full day of community service and raising awareness of people in need.

A more well-known version of chai, life, is L'chayim!, "to life," an expression we say at times of celebration. To say L'chayim is to reaffirm the wonder, mystery, and gift of life. L'chayim is a statement of hope, the possibility of renewal, and courage. Please contact us and come visit us one day to see the sanctuary's stained-glass windows that tell the stories of our ancient ancestors and to meet members of Loudoun Jewish community who are committed today to creating positive communal and Jewish life in Loudoun County. L'chayim! To life!

## Stilson holds Christmas broadcasts

Stilson Greene's weekly Themed Music Hour on Music Planet Radio has become a popular broadcast locally and nationally. Artist Lyle Lovett has posted his fondness for the show on his social media as have Graham Parker, Chris Hillman, John Gorka, Del Amitri and others.

On Dec. 14 and 21, Greene will air his First Annual Christmas Shows. "I remember listening to HFS during the Holidays when every DJ had their special hour of Christmas songs, now being on Cerphe's global station I thought I would bring that tradition back to the airwaves," said Greene. "You'll hear songs from a full spectrum of artists, including local, and many different genres of music, from Christmas classics to undiscovered seasonal gems. It really is appointment radio for the Holidays;

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26 »

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Dec 23: 8am – 9pm

Dec 25: Closed

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# Scouting for Food event in Lovettsville

BY ROBERT TALBOT

BSA Troops 962-B and 962-G, Cub Scout Pack 962, and local Girl Scout groups heralded a spirit of holiday charity with their Scouting for Food event in Lovettsville. Every first Saturday of November, the organizations collaborated to hang flyers on front doors throughout the town, asking for donations of non-perishable food items.

A week later, they collected donations and transported them to the Western Loudoun Food Pantry. The pantry, run by the New Jerusalem Lutheran Church, works directly with people in need to supply them with food and other necessities. This year, the Lovettsville Scouting for Food event raised 3,315 pounds of food for the pantry.

The Scouts appreciate the experience far more than the opportunity to earn service hours. They find it rewarding to raise awareness of local hunger, a largely unnoticed issue. It is rewarding for the Scouts to see the Town of Lovettsville show its full support. "You never see an ad for this kind of effort," said Scout Ian Murphy. "Nobody does it like we do."

Much of the Scouts' work occurs behind the scenes. In recent years, they have helped the pantry staff sort food donations as they come in, which all agree is the most difficult part of the event.

"We have to organize food items by kind and expiration date. We usually spend two hours just sitting in chairs marking the expiration on each," said Murphy. According to Damien Titus, "However, watching the pounds add



Scouts unload bags of donated food for weighing outside the New Jerusalem Church's food pantry.

up, seeing our success in how much food we got, was the favorite part for those who helped sort."

Trudging door-to-door in the chilly morning air, coordinating to make sure all streets are covered, loading donations into pickup trucks, and weighing and sorting the food, is no small task. However, this is one of the Scouts' favorite yearly events.

"It makes the community realize what's going on in other people's lives and makes them want to help other people," said Jude Kemp. Scouts recognize this time of year as a unique opportunity to spread Scout spirit to the outside world and inspire people to unite for a good cause.



## Potters' sale at Maple Cottage Pottery in Bluemont

Maple Cottage Pottery in Bluemont, VA will host an open studio sale on Saturday, Dec. 9 from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Available for purchase will be the varied works of LoCo Potters, a collective of talented local artisans. Offering functional works for the home and garden, holiday-themed

CONTINUED ON PAGE 25 »

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# A Cappies Review of Riverside High School's production of *Sherlock Holmes*

BY MAI SPARKS OF PARK VIEW HIGH SCHOOL

Riverside High School's production of *Sherlock Holmes* by Tim Kelly was anything but elementary. Within even the first moments of the performance, we could tell that the game was afoot. From the sinister red lighting, to the flush of blue tones, it was clear the audience was in for a night of mystery.

Sherlock Holmes has always been a popular, classic detective tale. His first appearance was in "A Study in Scarlet," a detective novel written by Arthur Conan Doyle. Of course, also making his first appearance is none other than Dr. Watson, Sherlock's partner in these novels. Sherlock Holmes quickly became the most famous detective in literature. Sherlock is known for

## COMMUNITY

his outstanding abilities in observation, deduction, forensic science and logical reasoning, which proves to be helpful when assisting the Scotland Yard.

During this production, the role of Sherlock Holmes is played by Arman Jaiswal. Jaiswal never fails to keep us on the edge of our seats. He embodies Sherlock in a way we have never seen before, the audience always entrapped by the mystery he battles to solve during this show. Jaiswal's accent plays such a huge part in his ability to connect to Sherlock Holmes's character.

In this production, Sherlock finds himself facing a whole ensemble of villains, one that stood out for their outstanding performance was Madge Larrabee, played by Anna Salmon. Salmon was able to display the villainous



Anna Salmon, Chance McGill, Simone Dotson, and Arman Jaiswal in Riverside High School's production of *Sherlock Holmes*.

motives of her character from the moment she stepped on stage, with her voice and body language alone, it was clear to the audience she was up to no good. Salmon's accent never slipped, nor did her character. She did a wonderful job presenting herself as a manipulative type. The tension between these two actors on stage made for a phenomenal rivalry.

The beautiful steam-punk production really came together with the help of all cast members. Sid Prince, played by Jojo Smothers, brought a sense of comedic relief every scene he walked into. He never lacked the ability to

break the tension with a clever remark or mischievous action, sometimes gone wrong.

The lovely Mrs. Bassick, played by Kaitlyn Lanigan, who brought together the flower woman, and the saleswoman to mask their dark plans. And of course, Alice Faulkner, whose presence is marked by the distinct scent of jasmine. Played by Simone Dotson, who stunned the audience with her gentle yet powerful stage presence. Dotson plays such a soft spoken character, who still commands the power on the stage and is able to keep up with Sherlock's quick-witted decisions.

The set design in itself was a wonder to behold, the genius use of a projection on the back of the set to display their inner thoughts, the contrasting light to distinguish between the courageous Mr. Holmes and the criminal Professor Moriarty.

The genius ways in which they used three different leveled flats to display different locations, and the simplicity of the props and set pieces they used still managed to capture the classic old London feel. Tech and stage crew really outdid themselves and were able to contribute so many small pieces into this set that really brought it together.

From the outstanding actors, intricate set design, beautiful lighting, to captivating sound, the audience can deduce that Riverside High School has clearly put an extensive amount of time, effort and heart into this production. Making for a captivating evening for all.



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## The Christmas Shop, Middleburg's oldest holiday tradition, turns 75

Since 1948, Emmanuel Episcopal Church has created "The Christmas Shop", a carefully curated selection of vendors who bring their special wares to town to let people shop for a cause. While guests are choosing quality presents for their loved ones, a portion of the vendors' profit is going to local charities.

Two floors of Emmanuel's Parish House at 105 E. Washington St., Middleburg, will become a shopper's holiday wonderland with 19 very different venues. Men's and women's clothing, health and beauty products, jewelry, decorative arts, kitchen ware, fine art, Christmas Tree ornaments and tasty food gifts are among the many items shoppers can browse.

The tradition began 75 years ago, when shopping for gifts was a vastly different experience than it is today. The Christmas Shop reprises the intimacy of strolling through the village finding unique gifts for our special people.

The Christmas Shop is open from Friday Dec. 8 through Sunday Dec. 10, 10 a.m. until 6 p.m. on Friday and Saturday and 3 p.m. on Sunday. A free-will offering of \$5 will be asked at the door.

Participating merchants contribute 15% of sales to Emmanuel Church, which shares the proceeds through grants with its local partners, such as A Place To Be, Windy Hill, Seven Loaves, LAWS and Blue Ridge Hospice. Added to a good holiday time is knowing that your purchases will help someone in need.

For more information, go to [www.EmmanuelMiddleburg.org](http://www.EmmanuelMiddleburg.org) or call 540 687-6297.



## Purcellville welcomes Excelsior Orthodontics

Loudoun local who grew up in Sterling, Dr. Minh Nguyen, along with his family and friends, the Town of Purcellville and the Loudoun County Chamber of Commerce celebrated the grand opening ceremony and ribbon cutting of his business – Excelsior Orthodontics.

His state-of-the-art office is located at 205 E Hirst Road, Suite 105 in Purcellville. Excelsior Orthodontics is open Monday through Thursday from 8 a.m. to 5p.m. Their website is [ExcelsiorOrthodontics.com](http://ExcelsiorOrthodontics.com).

## Officials break ground on new Aldie Fire Station

On Thursday, Nov. 16, officials from the Loudoun County Combined Fire and Rescue System, Loudoun County Government, the Loudoun County Department of Transportation and Capitol Infrastructure and the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors broke ground on a new fire and rescue station that will serve the residents of Aldie and the Rt. 50 corridor.

The new 23,000 square foot facility will replace the existing Aldie Fire and Rescue Station and provide an updated, accessible facility for Loudoun County Fire and Rescue personnel that



staff the station along with the Aldie Volunteer Fire Department.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24 »

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# A Cappies Review of Potomac Falls HS's *The Crucible*

BY MIRANDA RIDGLEY OF STONE BRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL

To some, witches are a childhood story. To others, a fun and classic Halloween costume. But to the citizens of Salem, Massachusetts, it is a sensitive topic that isn't to be trifled with. And yet, it still is in Panther Productions' chilling performance of Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*. The story, written in 1953, follows a man, his wife, and his mistress as their town gets tangled up in dangerous witchery accusations. Growing like weeds, the suspicion quickly poisons the minds of all, regardless of status or power, till trust is lost in everyone, even themselves.

The troubled man in the middle of this whirlwind, John Proctor, was undoubtedly perfected by Owen Cook. Cook bewitched the audience with his remarkable ability to convey his character's emotion at any given moment throughout. This, paired with the carefully crafted relationship between him and Elizabeth Proctor, elevates Cook's acting to one that rivals professionals. Speaking of Elizabeth, Lauren Ignazzitto can bring to life such mannerisms that could not have been better replicated by a woman of that time – from calculated pauses in conversation to the physicality between her and John's tense

moments in a relationship that grows despite the adversity they go through.

This terrifying tale could not have been accomplished without Avery Medina portraying the vexatious Abigail Williams. From the oh-so-sweet girl who fell in love with a married man to the manipulative maiden who casts the blame on the nearest person at a moment's notice, Medina creates remarkable contrast in every scene that she appears in, truly bringing this play to new heights. Similarly, Landon Ulrich as Deputy Governor Danforth takes Act Two by storm with a commanding stage presence and powerful line delivery which wholly complements his character in the best way.

Adding to the exceptionality of this show was the impressively dedicated ensemble. From minute background details in each scene to invigorating physical portrayals of possession, the dancing ladies were arguably one of the most influential parts of the experience.

But of course, the petrifyingly convincing acting only goes so far, and what they couldn't show was impeccably presented by tech. Most notable were the sets, led by Kara Adamson. Though at first unsuspecting, the backdrop adds the perfect



Photo by Kevin Cao

Company of *The Crucible* in Potomac Falls High School's production.

rustic and historical touch to each scene. The accuracy of each piece, from the courtroom benches to the bed itself, was heavily researched and hand-crafted by the students themselves.

Hand-in-hand with sets, lighting (led by Sarah Chung), encapsulated the dire mood of each scene through minuscule choices, such as LEDs ingrained in the set and a gobo that ties together the show with a noose at the very end. These choices truly show the importance of the small details in a bigger picture. Last but certainly not least, is Hair and Make-up's (led by Isabelle Sullivan) artistic ability to

physically show what each of the characters had suffered in this harsh story through sickly faces, gashes, and so much more.

Potomac Falls' display of this well-known cautionary tale leaves a chill in those who dare to see it.

With flawless actors that seemingly put a spell on the audience with their incredible talent and a crew conjuring an incredible understanding of each individual technical aspect, this department exceeded all expectations with an invigorating performance that will keep audiences hung on it for a long time.

## Tom Jewell art displayed at Gallery One



Photo by Audrey Carpenter

Loudoun County Arts Curator Steena Fullmer hangs several pieces of art from the private art collection of Leesburg resident Tom Jewell at Gallery One, located in the lobby of the Loudoun County Government Center on Nov. 6.

Jewell donated over 100 pieces of art to the Loudoun County government in 2020. His collection represents a wide array of art forms and styles, including both 2D and 3D art. Gallery One exhibits are coordinated by the Loudoun County Art Advisory Committee whose members are 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.

County residents who would like to have their art displayed can contact the Art Advisory Committee for consideration. The Art Advisory Committee maintains a permanent collection of roughly 90 pieces, including sculpture and ongoing rotated exhibits. For more information about the committee, visit [loudoun.gov/art-advisory-art](http://loudoun.gov/art-advisory-art).

The public can view the current exhibit at 1 Harrison St. SE in Leesburg through Jan. 5, 2024.

### POLICE CHIEF GIVES, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 22

staffing to support K9 officers being removed from traditional patrol squads. They would only be dispatched as a back-up officer or for duties specific to K9 officers. The K9 program consists of three dogs and handlers, but a fourth dog and handler are recommended with training in explosive detection.

Currently the LPD is undergoing a \$26.5 million renovation project expected to be completed in late 2025 to enhance and enlarge the 27-year-old building's facilities and amenities while modernizing the campus. Construction began Sept. 22.

The project will further build out existing locker rooms, including significant expansions to the women's locker room. The plans also include additional office space, interview rooms and an expanded parking lot for police cruisers.

A mezzanine level will also be built in the one-story building, where a fitness center will be added for police officers and staff to use. Renovations will include improvements to the electrical room and existing facilities, according to Dewberry Architecture in Leesburg, the project's design contractor.



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### LOUDOUN CARES TO ADMINISTER, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

Any applicant who does not have access to the internet may call Loudoun Cares at 703-669-4636 for assistance in submitting an application.

#### More Information

For more information about other rent assistance programs offered by Loudoun County, visit [loudoun.gov/rentassistance](http://loudoun.gov/rentassistance). For information about all Loudoun County housing programs and services, visit [loudoun.gov/housing](http://loudoun.gov/housing).

# Call for submissions for 7th Annual Cabin Fever Film Festival

Quiet on the set! Local filmmakers are invited to submit films for the seventh annual Cabin Fever Film Festival co-hosted by the Franklin Park Performing and Visual Arts Center and the Town of Purcellville Arts Council. This festival, which will be held Jan. 26 and 27, 2024, highlights films made by Loudoun County residents.

This year, festival organizers are adding a screening for youth films which will be held Friday, Jan. 26 beginning at 4:30 p.m. The main festival will start the same evening at 7 p.m. and continue Saturday at 10 a.m. The full schedule will be posted online on Jan. 16, 2024. Break that cabin fever in late-January and enjoy the seventh year of Purcellville's only film festival.

The theme for this year's festival is "Connections." Winners in the categories of Best in Theme, Festival Favorite, and Most Likely to Break Cabin Fever will each receive \$500 and a trophy hand-crafted by a local artist. Those who participate in the youth screening will be recognized for their submissions.

Roll sound! Entries should be a minimum of 1 minute, and no longer than 60

minutes long. All films should be in digital (mp4) format on a flash drive or on a DVD. Any subject matter is acceptable keeping in mind that the Cabin Fever Film Festival is a family-friendly event. Films can include live action, stop motion, animation, etc. Entry fee is \$10 for first film entry, \$5 for each additional film entry.

Films should be dropped off to Franklin Park Arts Center (36441 Blueridge View Lane, Purcellville, VA 20132) between Friday, Dec. 1, and Friday, Jan. 5, 2024, Monday – Friday, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. An application can be completed and fees paid at the time of film drop off. The application is available online at [www.franklinparkartscenter.org](http://www.franklinparkartscenter.org).

Marker! Important festival dates:

- Dec. 1, – Jan. 5, 2024: submissions accepted
- Jan. 16, 2024: announce the slate of films
- Jan. 26 and 27, 2024: festival

Action! Filmmakers must complete registration form and submit with film and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26 »

# Several rare finds on exhibit at Thomas Balch Library

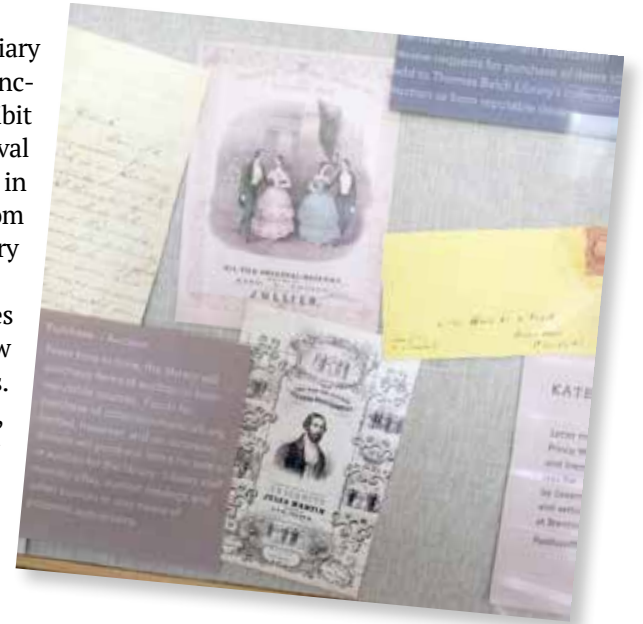
BY AUDREY CARPENTER

From a well-worn red diary to family letters and a dancing academy flier, an exhibit highlighting new archival collections is on display in the Margaret Mercer Room of Thomas Balch Library through December.

The exhibit also explores how the library acquires new items for its collections. Library staff monitor eBay, auction catalogs and other sources to stay aware of potential acquisitions, said Laura Christiansen, the library's curator.

People also donate items to the library, which is one of the region's well known libraries for historical artifacts. In fact, there is an entire wing of the library devoted to storing the artifacts - all available for public review.

Of note is the Timothy Taylor Jr. Letter, 1813 describing the Battle of Craney Island, and materials from the Scatterday/Beans Financial Documents Collection, 1829-1903. Both collections were recently processed by Thomas Balch



Library interns.

The exhibit is viewable during the library's operating hours, which are Monday and Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Tuesday and Thursday from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., Wednesday from 2 to 8 p.m., Saturday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Sunday from 1 to 5 p.m. For more information call 703-737-7195 or email [balchlib@leesburgva.gov](mailto:balchlib@leesburgva.gov).

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Video online at: [www.loudoun.gov/adultday](http://www.loudoun.gov/adultday)

Administered by Loudoun County Area Agency on Aging, Loudoun County Department of Parks, Recreation & Community Services



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### 2023 ADVENT & CHRISTMAS CALENDAR

Advent Wreath Workshop - Dec. 3, 11:00am

Christmas Youth Event – Dec. 16, Noon

Blue Christmas - Dec. 21, 7:00pm  
A Service of Healing & Hope

Family Christmas Eve – Dec. 24, 5:00pm

Festival Prelude Music – Dec. 24, 10:30pm

Candlelight Holy Eucharist – Dec. 24, 11:00pm

Christmas Day Eucharist – Dec. 25, 11:00am

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DR. MIKE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

Dr. Mike:

Our 5th grade 11-year-old daughter is having a terrible time at school this year because she's being pushed out of her longtime friend group. There wasn't an incident as far as we know, but she doesn't get invited to play and hang out much, she's not invited to many birthday parties. She's being put down or left out on social media.

We've had many a tearful night, and our daughter is now wanting to transfer schools. She basically goes to school unhappy and comes home unhappy. She spends a lot of time in her room. She barely left the house last weekend, and we're worried that she's depressed.

We've done a little parental research on her phone, and it seems that there are a couple of strong personalities in the friend group that are driving a wedge between the girls as a group and our daughter. It's also apparent to us that the interests of the girls are changing with some of the girls being focused on boys and make-up. Our daughter is still a young 11-year-old and not into those topics yet. Help!

– Worried Parent

Worried Parent:

As parents, watching our children struggle socially can be heart breaking, especially when it seems that there's not much we can do to help. There are, however, several things you can do to address the problem. I would start by reaching out to your daughter's teacher. They are pretty good at knowing what's going on with their students socially, and they're also usually quick to pick up on bullying, teasing or the sort of hurtful changing friendship dynamic that you've described.

Your daughter's teacher will likely have some good ideas to improve things for her. Her teacher or the school counselor could help to find opportunities for meaningful peer-to-peer interactions, projects and activities as a good start for your daughter and the involved girls.

You can also reach out to the parents of your daughter's friends to let them know what is going on since they may not know how bad things are for your daughter or how she's being pushed out by the girls. Perhaps the moms and/or dads can plan a few fun gatherings for the girls to smooth things over.

It's important to push your daughter to do more during this difficult time. By sitting in her room after school and/or by not leaving the house much over the weekend, your daughter is just ruminating about what's hurting her, which is only going to make her feel worse. Participating in a club or group activity, or joining a team sport could serve to get her socially confident again.

You write that your daughter may be depressed, so I think it's important to check in with her. By talking to her about her thoughts and feelings, you will be able to gauge where she is emotionally and how bad things are for her.

Having her see a child therapist – even for a wellness check for a session or two – might be a good idea. Therapy will provide her with a safe place to process her feelings while learning more adaptive strategies and coping skills.

Transferring schools is always an option, but one I wouldn't exercise until you've exhausted your efforts to correct things. It's possible that the current social dynamic is too much for your daughter to handle at her current school, but it's also possible that things will improve with effort and time.

Remember, we can't rescue our children from their problems, but it's our job to help them to find solutions when they struggle. I'm hopeful that your daughter will get to a better place with her longtime besties, or find joy in the new friendships she will form.

*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.*

OFFICIALS BREAK GROUND, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 21

The facility will include apparatus bays, bunkroom facilities, a training room, a break room, restrooms and showers, food preparation and dining areas, laundry and decontamination areas, supply storage, a gear and hose drying area, a breathing apparatus air compressor room, a fitness room, offices, and a repair shop. Additionally, the updated technology and design of the building will provide for much needed occupational cancer protections.

"When someone calls 911 for a fire or a cardiac arrest, we have only minutes to ensure enough fire and rescue

personnel and equipment arrive at the scene to get water on the fire or reach the patient to provide lifesaving emergency care, said System Chief Keith Johnson. "In addition to being a modern and safe facility for our firefighters, the location of the new fire station will facilitate the quick response times needed to protect Aldie and the surrounding community."

To follow along with the progress and learn more about the Aldie Fire and Rescue Station project, go to the DTCI project webpage. For information on the Loudoun County Combined Fire and Rescue System please visit [loudoun.gov/fire](http://loudoun.gov/fire).



**EXPLORING SPEED CAMERAS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11**

The study found that during school hours, the cumulative daily average vehicle count was 2,356, with an average daily violation of 676 for the three school zones. This equates to about 38% of drivers exceeding the speed limit in the three school zones studied.

The speed cameras will generate an unknown amount of annual revenue as the amount will be dependent on vendor options, number of violations issued and number of participating sites. However, the Chief said there should be no “net cost” associated with the program because it would be violator-funded.

A sworn officer is needed to verify each violation and potentially testify in court if citations are contested, but the Chief said it is unlikely that LPD could absorb the impact with current staffing levels, and said consideration should be given to hiring one or more flex part-time officers for support.

She said some agencies have utilized current employees paying overtime, while other agencies have deployed retired law enforcement employees. The anticipated hourly rate is estimated at \$50 per hour for retired officers, but final rates would be established as the program is further developed. A sworn officer is needed to verify each violation and potentially testify in court if citations are contested.

The Chief added, “After consulting with other jurisdictions and multiple vendors, the best avenue to pursue would be to partner with a private vendor,” stating the vendor would be responsible for the installation and maintenance of cameras while providing additional administrative support for the program. The systems would need a photo verification that the school

zone speed signs were flashing for court challenges.

In 2020, the Virginia General Assembly created code § 46.2-882.1, “Use of Photo Speed Monitoring Devices in Highway Work Zones and School Crossing Zones.”

**Photo speed**

monitoring devices utilize radar or LIDAR for speed detection and produce one or more photographs, micrographs, videotapes or other recorded images of a vehicle.

According to the Code, there is no limit on the number of school zones speed cameras the Town may have, but all sites must have a traffic study completed prior to installation and there is a requirement for a public awareness campaign prior to implementation. Signage about the speed cameras must be posted at all school locations within 1,000 feet.

Violations must be at least 10 miles per hour above the posted school zone speed limit, but the locality determines the threshold. The civil citation goes to the registered owner via mail with a fee of no more than \$100. There are no points applied to a driving record.

The Virginia Department of Transportation’s “Safe Routes to School” program has been active in Virginia since 2007 to make walking and riding to school safer for students. According to their literature, a generation ago, 90% of students walked or biked to school. Today, it’s only 10%. walking and biking to school decreases traffic congestion and pollution while increasing physical exercise.

The SRTS website has dozens of resources and distributes quarterly newsletters and regular e-blasts with information about grants and best practices from

communities in Virginia and elsewhere. Jurisdictions can apply for a variety of grants through the Transportation Alternatives Programs funding through SRTS. Information on that is here: [https://www.virginiadot.org/programs/srts\\_school\\_travel\\_plans\\_and\\_grants.asp](https://www.virginiadot.org/programs/srts_school_travel_plans_and_grants.asp).

SRTS offers “Quarterly Calls” for the public to learn more about its program. The next call is scheduled for Dec. 13 and the topic will be crossing guard shortages, said Katherine Graham, the Virginia SRTS coordinator. To participate in that upcoming call, contact: Katherine.graham@vdot.virginia.gov.

The SRTS 2021-2026 strategic plan can be found here: [https://www.virginiadot.org/programs/resources/safe\\_routes/2016-2017/Main\\_Page/2021-2026\\_Virginia\\_SRTS\\_Strategic\\_Plan.pdf](https://www.virginiadot.org/programs/resources/safe_routes/2016-2017/Main_Page/2021-2026_Virginia_SRTS_Strategic_Plan.pdf).

**POTTERS' SALE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19**

items, and many one-of-a-kind art pieces, this is an opportunity to shop for last minute handmade Holiday gifts at an outdoor event that follows current health and safety recommendations.

All works are dishwasher and microwave safe. There will also be a blazing fire pit for warmth and cheer.

Maple Cottage Pottery is located at 18301 Clayton Hall Rd., Bluemont, VA 20135. From Rt 7, turn onto the long paved driveway just before the “Welcome to Bluemont” sign.

For more information contact: [maplecottagepottery@gmail.com](mailto:maplecottagepottery@gmail.com).

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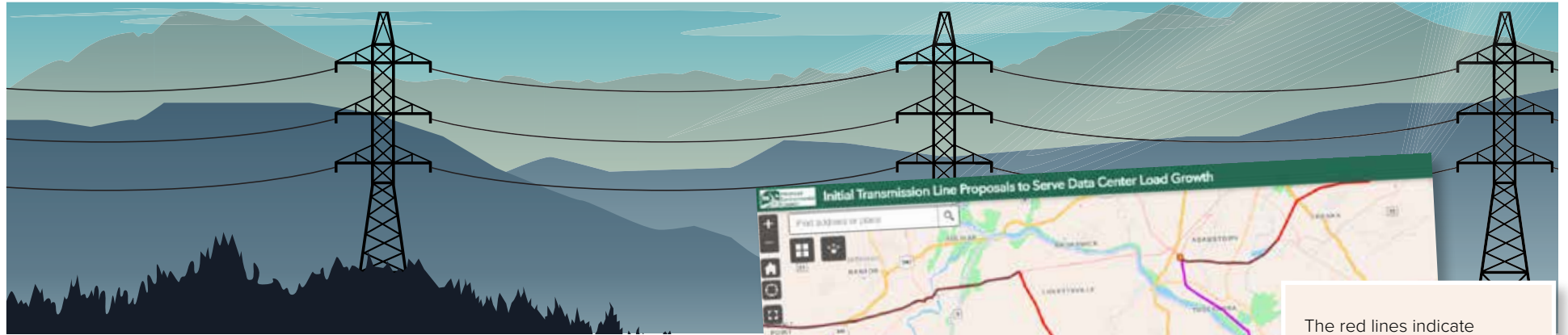
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#### NEW COALITION FORMS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

long-term effects on Virginians, Virginia's climate goals, and the state's natural resources. Data center proposals are being approved broadly with little understanding of their cumulative impacts and often behind nondisclosure agreements that prevent community members from participating fully in the process."

PEC is a Virginia nonprofit and an accredited land trust which focuses on conservation, restoration, smart growth and environmental issues, according to its website.

From PEC's website, Julie Bolthouse wrote, "As director of land use here at The Piedmont Environmental Council, I'm accustomed to responding to major development proposals. However, I've never seen anything quite like this past

year. The size, scale, and speed at which applications for data center projects are coming in and being approved is astounding."

She added, "Localities have rezoned thousands of acres for data center development, often with little scrutiny. Additionally, power contracts and water withdrawal and air quality permits are being lined up behind the scenes. The cumulative effect of all that's being approved is not yet understood, and because many of these projects have yet to be constructed, communities are likely to discover important impacts far too late."

The coalition is urging the state to study the cumulative effects of data center development on the state's electrical grid, water resources, air quality, and land conservation efforts, and to institute several common-sense regulatory



PEC Town Hall meeting in Warrenton on transmission lines and data centers.

Photo by Marco Sanchez/PEC

and rate-making reforms.

It will highlight several ways the data center industry in Virginia has failed to prioritize community concerns by proposing mega-campuses in inappropriate locations, such as near historic battlefields and cultural resources, schools, and residential communities. These data centers consume excessive amounts of water with little oversight' install thousands of large diesel generators that threaten local and regional air quality. They also compel massive energy infrastructure upgrades paid for by ratepayers.

In addition, speakers will discuss the significant threats data centers are posing to Virginia's clean energy progress.

#### Secretive veil

More and more, land use decisions around data centers are occurring behind a veil of secrecy forged by nondisclosure agreements and Virginia Freedom of Information Act violations, the coalition said.

The Blue Ridge Leader can confirm this fact. While working on a separate story on data centers we were told in one instance the owner of a data center could not be revealed due to a nondisclosure agreement, and in another instance a data center tenant would remain private.

The coalition will ask the state government to step in and require more transparency on the part of data center developers and require them to mitigate the negative environmental impacts of the industry by shifting the cost of new transmission lines and power generation onto the industry players, rather than on the backs of Virginia's ratepayers.

These issues were presented at a Nov. 13 Town Hall on Transmission Lines and Data Centers in Warrenton where coalition members talked to a packed house of attendees. A similar Town Hall meeting is scheduled for Loudoun County on Nov. 30 at the Old Stone School in Hillsboro located at 37098 Charlestown Pike.

#### STILSON HOLDS CHRISTMAS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18

so gather the family around the speakers."

Some of the artists you'll hear are John Prine, Burl Ives, Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, Elvis, The Temptations, Todd Wright, Brian Setzer, The Muppets, The Ronettes, Michael Shepard and many, many more.

For more information contact Stilson Greene at [studio@stilsongreene.com](mailto:studio@stilsongreene.com).

#### CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 23

entry fee. Cash, checks (payable to County of Loudoun) or credit card. Franklin Park Arts Center is open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Questions should be directed to Elizabeth Bracey, Manager, Franklin Park Performing and Visual Arts Center Elizabeth.Bracey@loudoun.gov or 540-338-7973.

#### SILVER LINE METROLINE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

in Loudoun feature electric vehicle charging stations, bike racks, daily parking and reserved parking. Loudoun County operates the Ashburn South and Loudoun Gateway garages. The Ashburn North garage, which is operated privately, is also an option for commuters. Information about parking at Loudoun's Metro station is online.

- Silver Line Bus Routes: Loudoun County Transit runs bus service that connects riders with Metrorail, including to and from Loudoun Park and Ride lots. It costs \$1.00 to ride all Silver Line bus routes. For additional details about each route, including the location of bus stops, times of routes and maps of routes, visit [loudoun.gov/silverlinebusroutes](http://loudoun.gov/silverlinebusroutes).
- Plan Your Trip: Riders can plan their trips with

online tools, including Google Maps, Transit app, and WMATA's Metro Trip Planner, which includes Metrorail service and bus service to and from Metrorail stations and other regional resources. You can also use the planner to calculate your fare, which is based on the service, ride length, day and time you ride. Purchase a SmarTrip® card, which is the easiest method to pay Metrorail fares. More information about planning your trip is online.

Visit [loudoun.gov/riderinformation](http://loudoun.gov/riderinformation) for details about Loudoun County Transit, including commuter, local-fixed route, Metro connection and paratransit bus services; planning a trip; service alerts; and how to ride safely.

Everything commuters need to know about accessing and using Metro from Loudoun County is posted at [loudoun.gov/silverline](http://loudoun.gov/silverline).

**TIM JON, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4**

its own, and certainly doesn't need my little tale of enlightenment. The stone portion of the structure dates back to 1911 – built by the sons and grandsons of former slaves. The name itself comes from an early pastor in the Church's

timeline, and the congregation maintained a school on the site from the early 1870's – just after the Civil War – until around 1940.

I'm told that the Preservation Foundation for the Church currently maintains a lease on the property, with hopes of a

future purchase, and permanent protection. Oh, and the congregation continues worship services a couple of Sundays each month, with everyone welcome to attend.

And so – it was quite late in life for me to discover this historic, little place of the

Spirit. It was even later for me to chance upon the source of light 'from within,' but it appears that the congregation has been in on the secret for quite some time, indeed. I said at the beginning of the story that the place seemed to be sleeping; perhaps, but very much alive.

**THREE TOWN WINTER, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15**

specials, a honey tasting, and sales on some of their favorite gift items. All purchases of \$100 or more will also receive a 20% discount. Owner, Meredith Brown said, "We are busy stocking our shelves with fun holiday gifts and food items. Our coffee bar will be serving seasonal drinks. We are looking forward to welcoming customers, new and old, to our shop."

Northern Virginia's favorite vintage store, Nostalgia Boutique, will be the hub for Purcellville. Customers will be treated to 20% off at Nostalgia as well as their menswear boutique, Mister on Main. The party continues in the back parking lot where Walsh Family Winery will be offering tastings of their products and mixologist Mick Perrigo will be serving non-alcoholic beverages and pouring samples from Catoctin

Distillery. There will also be several vendors selling vintage clothing, handmade candles, and home décor.

"Events like this, really help to showcase our town and the surrounding areas to people who otherwise wouldn't venture to explore all that our small town has to offer," said Redd.

"There's no need to shop the big box stores this year, simply travel along the 7-mile stretch from Round Hill, to

Purcellville, to Hamilton, and see all the goodies our local businesses have just waiting for you."

The Purcellville Christmas Parade is also on this day, so be sure to come early and get your spot.

The Three Town Winter Get Down event goes from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and check the website [www.3twgd.com](http://www.3twgd.com) to see the individual hours for each participating business.

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**FAITHFUL STEWARDS**, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

On Monday, Oct. 30, 2006, Mayor Lazaro responded, "The Planning Commission has recommended that your property be shown as private open space, I support that change and respect the wishes of the neighborhood that nothing further be pursued."

Fast forward a decade plus, and now the HOA's common open space has been encumbered by Town Ordinance and Official Zoning Maps, including Article 14a protection as a Historic Corridor Overlay District and Article 12 as part of the Town's Floodplain Overlay District.

Article 12's primary purpose is to "protect the lives and property" of Town residents from the dangers associated with flooding, when wetlands like this are disturbed by development (like adding massive amount of fill dirt into the floodplain as proposed by the construction of the 7/890 Interchange).

On Oct. 16, 2018, the County Board of Supervisors purchased an encumbered HOA Lot from a young family using taxpayer dollars. This HOA Lot is commonly known as LOT 74.

With this purchase, the County stopped paying real estate taxes to the Town and allowed this once beautiful home overlooking the HOA's common open space to deteriorate. The County also allowed law enforcement to conduct close quarter training in the home, kicking in doors and breaking windows, with little to no respect for other

HOA homeowners who witnessed this activity.

Because the County purchase was an encumbered HOA property, the County automatically became an HOA member and was obligated to pay assessments (dues) and abide by the covenants, conditions, and restrictions.

This purchase stayed unnoticed by most of the HOA families until Nov. 2022, as most assumed the County had taken the home and property by eminent domain proceedings.

In April 2022, a newly elected HOA Board contacted Supervisor Tony Buffington's office concerning these issues and presented them with all the HOA governing documents. Ms. Christi Maple, Chief of Staff reached out to apologize and promised that the County would clean up the trash and debris in the lot and maintain the grass per the HOA covenants.

By ignorance or by arrogance or both, the County's unwitting purchase of an HOA encumbered property has complicated the County's goal to construct the new Rt. 7/690 Interchange.

Although the County has the authority to use eminent domain to acquire private property in the county, the County does not have eminent domain power to acquire land rights from other political subdivisions within the Commonwealth of Virginia, such as the Town of Purcellville.

What the County would prefer is for

the Town Council to use its authority to execute proceedings in condemnation, as suggested in the County Board of Supervisors Finance/Government Operations and Economic Development Committee reports from Dec. 13, 2022, and Jan. 10, 2023.

During the June 13 Town Council meeting, Mayor Stan Milan promised he had no personal intention as Mayor to turn his back on the Catoctin Meadows citizens regarding floodplain easement vacation concerns.

"The Town Council will not turn our backs on the Mayfair or Catoctin Meadows HOA citizens, but I am just one vote," Mayor Milan said.

However, on Nov. 14, 2023, at the monthly Board of Supervisors Finance, Government Operations and Economic Development Committee meeting, Chair Phyllis J. Randall was able to table the vote to approve the phased approach for the 7/690 Interchange.

Chair Randall alluded that she, along with Tony Buffington and other members of the community, thought that a survey of what the residents in the area might want could be helpful in moving the Town Council to vacate the Town Floodplain easements with the HOA.

Chair Randall added that she is going to take one more run at the Town Council post-election and encourage them to conduct a survey to understand what the citizenry may want.

Chair Randall who claims to be an

advocate for the protection of western Loudoun's diminishing pristine forested wetlands and stream beds is now advocating to destroy land that she commonly owns along with 73 families in Purcellville.

For 26 years, the 74 families of Catoctin Meadows have been faithful stewards of this once-orphaned 14.2-acre property. These dedicated and loving HOA families have cared for this property by leaving it in its most natural state, allowing its wildlife to return and the land to heal from the 1980s construction of the Rt. 7 Bypass.

These dedicated families have honored the Town encumbrances placed on their land as part of the Town's Historic Corridor Overlay District and trust the Town is looking after their lives and property within the Towns Floodplain jurisdiction. They continue to be good stewards of this invaluable wetlands.

---

*Ron Rise Sr. is the founder and CEO of Rocketmagic, LLC, an aerospace engineer with 46 years' experience building and managing multiple propulsion test and launch facilities in Virginia, Camden Arkansas, NASA Stennis Space Center Mississippi and Mojave California. He and his wife Becky moved to Catoctin Meadows in 1998 where they raised their two sons and enjoy the small-town charm of Purcellville with their beagle named Sadie.*

**HOUSTON**, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

money, incumbency or candidate quality matters most. I'd posit that this year, all those factors were about equal.

Now to some individual races.

**Chair:** Phyllis Randall (D) had the closest race of any incumbent. She was probably hurt by the *contretemps* over her travels, Gary Katz (R) ran a surprising race, and Sam Kroiz (I) was a spoiler. Contrary to speculation, Randall won't run for the House of Representatives, so she'll be chair for another four years. That's good.

**Catoctin:** Caleb Kershner (R) won handily over John Ellis (I.) Ellis had the backing of conservation voters, but Kershner is an excellent politician, if not a true-blue protector of our rural life.

**Little River:** Long-time aide to Supervisors, Laura Tekrony (D,) won this new seat by seven points. I called Rich Ramus, Loudoun's Future Executive Vice President, for his reaction. "We gave her a lot of money at the beginning to help jump-start her campaign." Laura is well-liked, and that money certainly helped:

A seven-point victory was only a 1,200-vote margin, so every vote counted.

**Ashburn:** Mike Turner (D) beat newcomer Tumay Harding (R) by 2,200 votes, a good margin. Turner is perhaps the hardest-working Supervisor and is full of ideas we like.

**Dulles:** Incumbent Matt Letourneau (R) easily defeated Pujia Khanna (D.) Khanna was very aggressive in asking for contributions and ended up with about the same war chest as Letourneau. Letourneau is a good candidate and more importantly, a very good Supervisor.

**Algonkian:** Incumbent Juli Briskman (D) gained fame and first won her seat due to a photograph of her flipping off President Trump's motorcade. Challenger Debbie Rose (R) was a good candidate this year but was outspent by Briskman, who retained the seat. Conservation interests seemed to like Rose and gave pretty heavily to her, but that's become a very Democratic district and the outcome was a disappointment to them.

**Other districts:** Kristen Umstatt (D, Leesburg) and Koran Saines (D, Sterling) were unopposed. Sylvia

Glass (D, Broad Run) easily defeated her Republican opponent.

**Other Races Worth Mentioning**

While most of us focused on the Supervisors' election, there was an interesting sea change on the School Board: All the winners are newcomers. The old, bad School Board is just a nightmarish memory. Let's hope the new Board keeps Loudoun off the evening news.

Contrary to the big Democrat majority on the new School Board, all the constitutional officers are Republican. While there were some challengers, the incumbents' success means that voters are satisfied with the jobs Gary Clemens, Bob Wertz, Sheriff Chapman *et al* are doing. The only incumbent to lose was the George Soros-backed Buta Biberaj, who spent over a million dollars on her race. Rejoice at that.

---

*Charles Houston lives in Paeonian Springs and insists on voting only on Election Day, and in-person. He suggests visiting the Loudouns-Future.org website.*

**HUMAN SERVICES NONPROFIT**, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

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Anyone who requires a reasonable accommodation for any type of disability or who needs language

assistance to participate in the application process should contact [nonprofits@loudoun.gov](mailto:nonprofits@loudoun.gov).

For more information, visit [loudoun.gov/nonprofits](http://loudoun.gov/nonprofits) or send an email to [nonprofits@loudoun.gov](mailto:nonprofits@loudoun.gov).

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**LETTER: AN OPEN LETTER**, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

Biological girls have the same rights and privileges equal to the transgender girls. The right to be safe from harm. The right to privacy. The right to fair competition in sports. The right to feel safe and protected in their own bathroom and locker rooms.

The desire to transition is a personal private matter that should be left up to the child and the child's parents. The schools, the teachers, the guidance counselors, the school psychologists, everyone at the school, should not engage in secret with the students to assist them in their desire to transition without parental consent and involvement.

LGBTQ literature should not be provided to students by the schools. This a matter best left to the parents. If the parents wish for their child to see this literature, they can find it on their own. Children and their parents have plenty of time to figure it out on their own and with their desired professional help.

Admit nothing. Deny everything. Make counter accusations – this appears to be the pattern of behavior from the previous school board. They never admitted there were two sexual assaults. When confronted, they denied it occurred. Shortly after they accused parents of being domestic terrorists who spoke up at school board meetings.

Your decision to delay notification to parents concerning the multiple drug overdoses in your high schools is a continuation of keeping parents in the dark – much like hiding from parents the two sexual assaults of girls in two different schools by a boy wearing a skirt. This pattern of behavior must change. Parents must be the first to know when their child is in harm's way.

Our schools must focus on academics and excellence.

*Damon Cable  
Purcellville*

**LETTER: NO TO BIG LATTICE**, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

After that, the energy company behind the proposal for Project 853, Florida-based NextEra, will finalize its proposed path for an application early next year to the Virginia regulator, the State Corporation Commission. The SCC will then go through its usual process and considerations to make a final decision as governed by Virginia legal code §56-46.1.

This whole process starts with Loudoun approving the building of more data centers than the regional infrastructure can support, but the final decision about the power line will be at the State level.

The Board of Supervisors are not without influence, and neither are you. First, get informed (register for the Town Hall in Hillsboro at 7 p.m. on Nov.30 sponsored by the Piedmont Environmental Council, the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy, and the Waterford Foundation and see the projected full map from PEC) and spread the word to your neighbors.

Second, urge the County Board to weigh in ([bos@loudoun.gov](mailto:bos@loudoun.gov)). Third, let PJM know ([custsvc@pjm.com](mailto:custsvc@pjm.com)) before they meet on Dec. 5 that they should stick to existing rights-of-way, or else consider alternative methods as we ended up doing with the 230 kV line along the Leesburg Bypass and under

the W&OD Trail, and not blast through the County's second major economic pillar, the agriculture/tourism industry.

PJM is sensitive to public concerns. Finally, as this process proceeds, we will need to express our views to our recently elected representatives to the General Assembly and to the SCC directly. The SCC can override virtually all local zoning, but by law must "consider" environmental and economic factors. The sooner we weigh in, the better chance we have of influencing the final outcome.

*Tom Donahue  
Leesburg, VA*

**LEESBURG BECOMES HUB**, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

with a Cloud provider for its data center campus located near Panda Stonewall Energy Plant in Leesburg.

The site is located on the east side of Sycolin Road and is bound by Cochran Mill Road to the north and Energy Park Drive. Construction of the first building is set to begin in 2023/2024 with build-out through 2027.

The Cloud provider will lease all five buildings, composed of 1.9 million square feet, as part of a 430 MW (megawatt) build-to-suit agreement for its entire data center campus.

TA Realty said the unnamed tenant selected the campus due to its scale, power, and location. The site is adjacent to the energy plant and an existing substation.

Also, Chuck Kuhn, president of JK Land Holdings LLC, is seeking County approval to build three data centers and two warehouses on roughly 112 acres it owns in Leesburg on Cochran Mill Road, according to his website: <https://www.jklandholdings.net/jklh-announces-site-plan-for-leesburg-industrial-area>.

The land previously had a dump truck dispatch operation, as well as an asphalt plant and concrete plant. It is located north of where Goose Creek meets Sycolin Creek, and sits west of where Cochran Mill Road intersects with Washington & Old



A rendering of TA Realty's data center campus in Leesburg. Courtesy/TA Realty



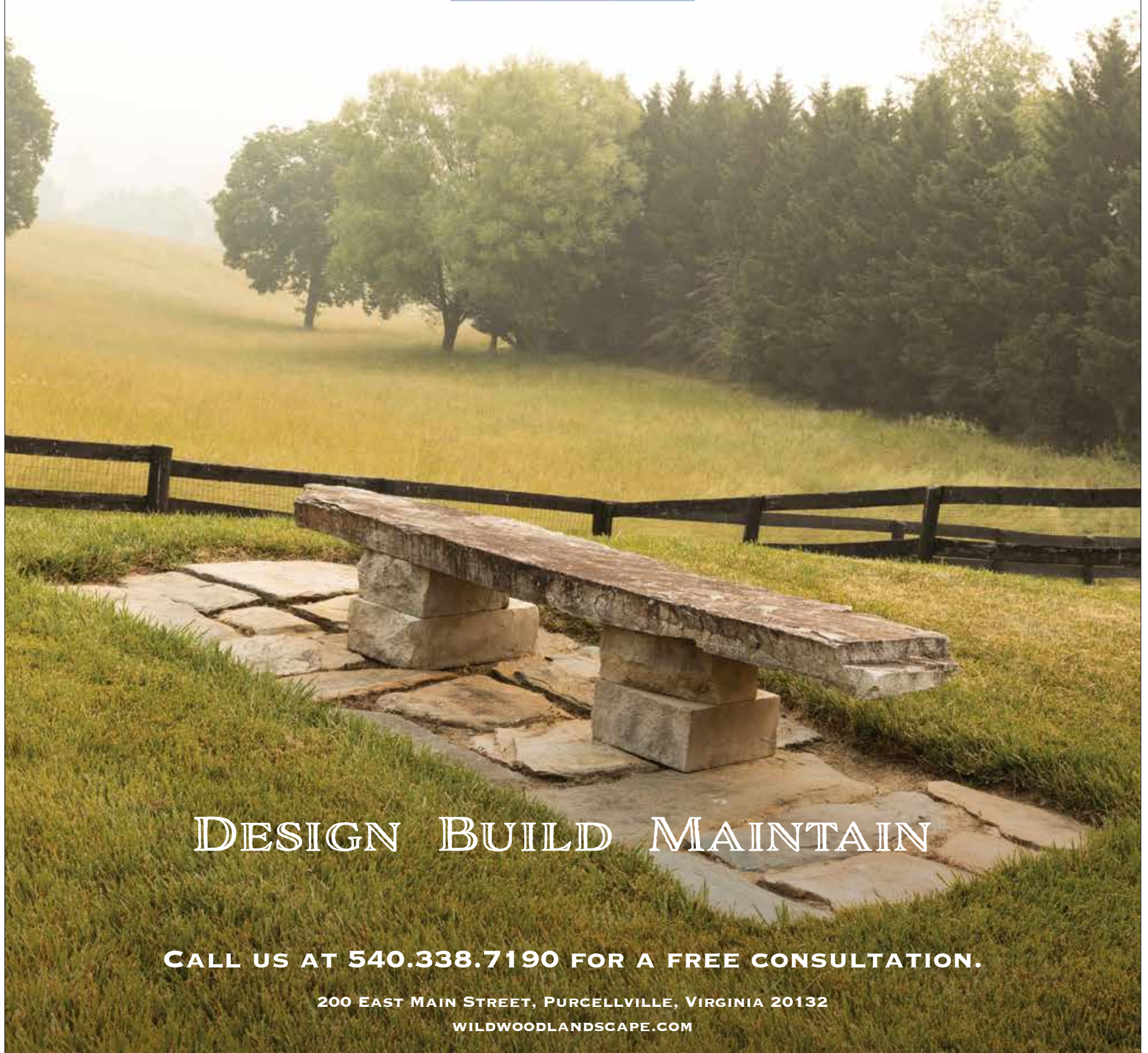
Site of two new data centers at Compass Creek in Leesburg.

Dominion Trail and east of Durham Court, per the land application.

"As of now, the 3rd submission review for this site plan is underway," said Buddy Riser, executive director of Loudoun County Economic Development.

Kuhn has said he would like to immediately start construction if his application is approved. It is unknown whether a tenant has been selected for the data centers and warehouses.

The County has 115 data centers to date.



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