

CULPEPER STAR★EXPONENT

After fleeing Afghanistan, a group of refugees returns to international competition

SPORTS, B1



3 sensational squash recipes to try this autumn

LIVELY, D1

Tuesday, October 28, 2025

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IT OUTAGE

Employees lauded for calm under pressure

ALLISON BROPHY CHAMPION
Culpeper Star-Exponent

The county recently recognized dozens of employees for demonstrating “extraordinary resolve” and professionalism when a routine IT upgrade took down the 911 system for three days in June. Months later as Culpeper County continues to rebuild systems and rework IT functions, the board of supervisors issued a proclama-

tion in September in recognition and commendation of exemplary service during the “catastrophic failure.” Throughout the incident, numerous individuals and teams also demonstrated adaptability—often under sustained pressure and without regard to personal convenience, according to the resolution listing all the names. “We lost our IT structure — that

caved in,” said Board Chairman David Durr. The incident highlighted several points, he added. “Technology is a great thing, until it’s not and then...people are the really important things in this world, and we are blessed with a great team that came together,” Durr said. “It was a disaster that was handled very, very well.” The resolution lists dozens of

names from county administration, the sheriff’s office, emergency management, IT, E911 dispatchers and environmental services. During the several-day out that took out the county’s 911 system, calls were rerouted through the Fauquier Sheriff’s Office, through an existing agreement, and local dispatchers worked out of the neighboring facility.

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NEW HOUSING CONSTRUCTION RAMPS UP



ALLISON BROPHY CHAMPION, CULPEPER STAR-EXPONENT

Construction is ongoing in the 268-unit Three Oaks housing development for people 55 and older, on former farmland just outside of the Town of Culpeper on Nalles Mill Road.

Ownership still out of reach for many post-pandemic

BY MOLLY MANNING
VCU Capital News Service

RICHMOND — The Virginia real estate market still reflects the impacts of the homebuying boom five years ago, as a result of many working from home and all-time low mortgage rates. Interest rates and mortgages remain at post-pandemic highs as homeowners show reluctance to sell and first-time home buyers struggle to cope as prices soar due to limited

construction of new homes in metro areas. National housing markets are currently “buyer’s markets,” set to favor homebuyers, according to Redfin. Ideally this is the time to buy a home, but few Virginians can afford to at current prices. Areas closer to urban cores in Virginia are receiving many offers, implying that they still represent seller’s markets, according to

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LASSO ACT

Vindman co-sponsors bill for western wild horses and burros

Measure would test drones by BLM to corral animals for population control

ALLISON BROPHY CHAMPION
Culpeper Star-Exponent

U.S. Rep. Eugene Vindman, D-7th, is proposing a bill with a Florida Republican to use drones for less invasive rounding up of wild horses and burros on federal lands. The LASSO Act was announced on day 24 of the government shutdown. The Leveraging Aerial Systems for Stewardship Operations Act, introduced with Rep. Vern Buchanan, proposes use of unmanned aerial systems “for the humane roundup and management” of the animals, “saving people time and money,” according to release Friday from Vindman’s office. The overarching issue of corralling wild horses has long been an issue. In June, Arizona Rep. Juan Ciscomani and Rep. Dina Titus of Nevada, co-chairs of the Congressional Wild Horse Caucus, were joined by Rep. Steve Cohen of Tennessee in introducing the Wild Horse and Burro Protection Act of 2025. That bill seeks to eliminate the use of helicopters in rounding up wild horses and burros and requires a study into alternative methods including using traditional cowboys. Some in the industry agree drones is another lower-stress alternative. “Each year, thousands of wild horses and burros are chased by helicopters, separated from their families, and confined in harsh holding facilities,”

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Derby, Vesuna in this week’s Academic Spotlight. **PAGE A3**

Weather
Mainly cloudy and breezy
High 59 • Low 42
FORECAST • A6

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