

CULPEPER STAR-EXPONENT

Family with ties to Rappahannock traces decades of service in the White House

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A supersized version of a beloved classic snack cake

LIVELY, INSIDE

Tuesday, March 17, 2026

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General Assembly adjourns without budget

MICHAEL MARTZ
Richmond Times-Dispatch

The General Assembly left Richmond without a new, two-year Virginia budget on Saturday, but the debate over state financial incentives for the data center industry will remain in the center spotlight until the legislature returns next month for a special session on April 23.

The legislature asked Gov. Abigail Spanberger to order the special session the day after its annual veto

session and two days after a voter referendum on a constitutional amendment on congressional redistricting that has overshadowed much of the 60-day legislative session that began on Jan. 14.

The Senate adjourned at 7:26 p.m., 18 minutes after the House of Delegates, to end the session.

“That’s a wrap on legislative session 2026...except Democrats couldn’t agree on budget, so we have to come back to Richmond

soon,” posted local Del. Karen Hamilton, R-Orange, finishing her first regular session at the statehouse.

“The good news is, most of the new taxes didn’t make it through. The bad news is, tyrannical anti-gun bills, collective bargaining, pro-criminal bills and more are now headed to the Governor’s desk. Now she will demonstrate how moderate’ she is,” Hamilton said.

Spanberger and the House oppose the Senate proposal to repeal the state sales tax exemption for data

centers because of the potential harm to Virginia’s business reputation. But they continue to look for ways — including a potential consumption tax on big energy users — to boost the amount of state revenue paid by data centers without eliminating the primary incentive that has made the state the center of the global data center industry.

Separately, the House and Senate approved compromise legislation

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NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCAL FAMILIES



CULPEPER COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Angie Fiscus, who will be the inaugural principal at Mountain Run Elementary School, shovels some dirt at last Tuesday’s groundbreaking.

County breaks ground on 7th elementary school, Mountain Run

ALLISON BROPHY CHAMPION
Culpeper Star-Exponent

Community members gathered last week to ceremonially break ground on Culpeper County’s 7th public elementary school.

It was a warm, sunny afternoon, marking the start of a new chapter for the division at the scenic Mountain Run Elementary School.

Culpeper-based Taft Construction is building the 86,000-square-foot, \$39 million facility, across from Eastern View High School on Poor Farm Road, in the area of Green’s Corner and the Culpeper Sports Complex.

“Elementary schools are places where childhood memories are made,” said Angie Fiscus, who will be the founding principal. “The work beginning here today will create a school where students will read their

first books, learn foundational math skills, perform in concerts, proudly display their artwork, and ultimately make memories that last a lifetime.”

The current principal at Yowell Elementary in town will remain there through next school year until the new school opens in the 2027-28 academic year.

“One of the things that makes this moment especially meaningful is that Mountain Run Elementary represents the coming together of six elementary schools across our school division,” Fiscus said. “We are bringing together students, staff, and families from different spaces and places to build something new together.”

Attending the groundbreaking were all members of the Culpeper County School

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‘Blue Devil’ colors run deep in Brown family DNA

Duke beats Virginia in ACC; senior Maliq Brown rooted in basketball

ALLISON BROPHY CHAMPION
Culpeper Star-Exponent

In the heart of Hoos country, Culpeper basketball fans are celebrating a hometown player from another top university team that’s a longtime UVA rival.

No. 1 Duke took home its 24th ACC Tournament title by holding off No. 10 Virginia, 74-70, at the Spectrum Center Saturday night in Charlotte, N.C. The title is the second consecutive for the Blue Devils and the third in four seasons under head coach Jon Scheyer, according to Duke Men’s Basketball.

Culpeper’s Maliq Brown, a 6’9” Duke forward, helped with the win, scoring four points, including a dunk, with five rebounds and four turnovers. In an interview after the game, he called Virginia “a tough team.”

Winning the ACC Tournament is sweeter this year than last year, Brown said.

“For me, it was better because I got to play, I got to be out there with my brothers,” he said, referring to his injuries last year. “Obviously, being a senior, just being out here with my guys getting this win feels amazing. It means more to me now.

“Ever since I put that jersey on and signed that deal to come here, every day is something new...we didn’t shy away from nothing. We came out and are going to keep doing it until we get that win.”

Saturday’s competitive game followed a nail-biter Friday against Florida, in which Duke barely pulled out an 80-79 win. It capped a week of excitement for one local sports-loving family and the community at large after Brown was named the Atlantic Coast Conference’s Defensive Player of the Year.

Basketball roots, awards “very well-deserved”

The hometown standout comes from a long line of ball players, including his father, 6’3” Preston, an All-Star basketball and football player with the Culpeper County High School Blue Devils. Maliq’s 5’10” mother, Tasha Bowles Brown, played for the CCHS Blue Devils Ladies and in one game had an outstanding night with 24 rebounds and 19 points.

Maliq Brown went to A.G. Richardson Elementary School and Floyd T. Binns Middle School in Culpeper before attending high school at Blue Ridge School in St. George, leading their basketball team to multiple championships.

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Aly Meadows and Laura Kiersma are in today’s Academic Spotlight

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