

CULPEPER STAR-EXPONENT

'Powerhouse influencers' Nick & Tina Freitas speaking at homeschool convention,

A5, LOCAL



Locals react with shock, sadness in Fairfax family deaths, recall former Lt. gov's visit to Culpeper,

A4, REGION

Saturday, April 18, 2026

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AEROJET ROCKETDYNE

L3 Harris invests \$1.2 billion in Orange

Defense, aerospace contractor on county line adding 350 jobs

ALLISON BROPHY CHAMPION
Culpeper Star-Exponent

ORANGE — National defense and aerospace contractor L3Harris Technologies will invest more than \$1.2 billion to significantly expand

rocket motor production, testing and research at its facility on the county line with Culpeper, creating 350 jobs.

The solid rocket motors made at the local plant, Aerojet Rocketdyne, power the military's tactical missiles, providing "pound for pound the most affordable thrust," according to company marketing materials.

The local site, located off of Zachary Taylor Highway, also developed

and manufactured components that powered NASA's successful Artemis II mission.

The \$1.2 billion business build-out is the largest economic development expansion ever in Orange, said Board of Supervisors Chairman Bryan Nicol.

"This is a great morning in Orange County," he said at a formal announcement Wednesday morning at the public safety building.

Governor Abigail Spanberger was in attendance; her husband, Adam, has worked as a software engineer and subject-matter expert in the space & missions division at L3Harris, a global firm, since 2019.

More than 150 people packed the board of supervisors meeting room for the big announcement, which began with state collaboration

Please see L3 HARRIS, Page A4



'CULPEPER WAS MOST READY FOR WAR'

CULPEPER STAR-EXPONENT, FILE

Peter Davenport, president of the Virginia Society of the Sons of the American Revolution, reads an excerpt from George Washington's farewell address in 2019 during a ceremony marking the general and first United States president's 287th birthday in the Culpeper Masonic Cemetery.

Minutemen mustered first in Va., Patriots of Color fought alongside them

ALLISON BROPHY CHAMPION
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Farmers, fathers, merchants, clerks, judges, lieutenants, captains and sharpshooters all swiftly joined forces on a local field in 1775 to muster the Culpeper Minutemen — a colonial militia of several hundred men from the area who marched off to fight the British.

They wore green linen hunting shirts dyed to match the foliage, often featuring the motto "Liberty or Death" in white on the chest. They wore bucktails in their hats, blue cloth leggings, and carried rifles, tomahawks, and knives, according to the Culpeper Minutemen Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution.

History-minded tour takers last year, for the 250th anniversary, walked in the footsteps of the Minutemen and visited notable sites tied to the frontiersman in Culpeper, Fauquier and Orange counties.

America at 250: The story still unfolding

This story is part of an ongoing series exploring the 250th anniversary of the United States in 2026. Visit our website to read other stories in the series and share your own.

The Culpeper tour stopped at Culpeper Baptist Church, Old House Vineyards, Commerce Street, Main Street, colonial Little Fork Church in Rixeyville and even Kohl's — areas around the county forever tied to the Minutemen.

Noted historian and author Jim Bish created the explosively popular Culpeper Minutemen Leaders Tour last year with close to 150 people participating. He organized the tours because the Culpeper Minutemen were the first to organize a militia when the call went out, in urgent need to push back the Brits.

Please see MINUTEMEN, Page A6



CONTRIBUTED

The Culpeper Minutemen wore uniforms dyed the color of leaves.

Check out church briefs on today's Faith & Values PAGE A2

Weather

Hot
High 90 • Low 55
Forecast • A8

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