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PAIGE DINGLER PHOTOS, THE NEWS & ADVANCE
Pictured below, Altavista Mayor, Reggie Bennett, speaks at the Avoca Museum, pictured above, on Saturday, July 19.

Avoca Museum offers sneak peek

An early look of Revolutionary War military officer Charles Lynch project

MARK HAND
The News & Advance

The Avoca Museum and Historical Society in Altavista offered an early look at a biography of Revolutionary War military officer Charles Lynch on Saturday, nearly a year before the book is scheduled for publication when Americans will be celebrating the nation's 250th anniversary.

Wyatt Golden, a graduate of Liberty University who is researching and writing the biography, presented a portion of his findings about Lynch inside the large Queen Anne-style house on the grounds of Avoca.

Golden's book is part of the museum's Colonel Lynch Project, which also includes an exhibit about Lynch, who was the older brother of John Lynch, the founder of Lynchburg.

The book is scheduled to be published in July 2026, although the public can pre-order the biography now for the discounted price of \$16. Based on what he has written so far, and the research still needed, Golden expects the Lynch biography will total at least 250 pages.

In his remarks at Saturday's event, Golden noted fellow Virginians such as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and Patrick Henry are household names through their role in founding the nation.

"When people think of the American Revolution and the major figures in it, no one thinks of Charles Lynch," Golden said.

For his part, though, Lynch ran an important gunpowder manufacturing plant in an area that was then part of Bedford County before Campbell County was



created in 1782.

A major arsenal for the Continental Army also was located in the New London area of Bedford County, one of only a handful of arsenals in the colonies. A prisoner of war camp housed thousands of British soldiers and other loyalists near Charlottesville.

A successful uprising by these British loyalists, with access to the gunpowder and the arms repository, could have turned the tide against the American patriots organized under the Continental Army.

"It looks really bad to the patriot cause if this uprising succeeds," Golden said about the events of the summer of 1780.

Washington, Jefferson and Henry weren't nearby to lead the fight against the British. "Who do the patriots turn to? In Bedford County, they turn to Charles Lynch," Golden said.

It was Lynch's responsibility to take down the uprising and crush it before it could accomplish its goals. And he succeeded.

"That gives you a brief idea of how important this moment was, and no one knows about it," Golden told the audience.

Designated a Virginia Historic Landmark and listed in the National Register of Historic Places, Avoca is the site where Lynch lived and worked starting in 1755. The current house, built in 1901, and several other buildings on the 10 acres

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Trump's 'beautiful' big bill

Budget law shapes battle for House control in '26

BILL BARROW, JONATHAN J. COOPER AND JACK BROOK
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Debate over President Donald Trump's sweeping budget- and-policy package is over on Capitol Hill. Now the argument goes national.

From the Central Valley of California to Midwestern battlegrounds and suburban districts of the northeast, the new law already is shaping the 2026 midterm battle for control of the House of Representatives. The outcome will set the tone for Trump's final two years in the Oval Office.

Democrats need a net gain of three House seats to break the GOP's chokehold on Washington and reestablish a power center to counter Trump. There's added pressure to flip the House given that midterm Senate contests are concentrated in Republican-leaning states, making it harder for Democrats to reclaim that chamber.

As Republicans see it, they've now delivered broad tax cuts, an unprecedented investment in immigration enforcement and new restraints on social safety net programs. Democrats see a law that rolls back health insurance access and raises costs for middle-class Americans while cutting taxes mostly for the rich, curtailing green energy initiatives and restricting some workers' organizing rights.

"It represents the broken promise they made to the American people," said Rep. Suzan DelBene, a Washington Democrat who chairs the party's House campaign arm. "We're going to continue to hold Republicans accountable for this vote."

Whether voters see it that way will be determined on a district-by-district level, but the battle will be more intense in some places than others. Among the 435 House districts, only 69 contests were decided by fewer than 10 percentage points in the 2024 general election.

The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee has so far identified 26 Democratic-held seats it must defend vigorously, along with 35 GOP-held seats it believes could be ripe to flip. Republicans' campaign arm, the National Republican Congressional Committee, has so far listed 18 GOP incumbents as priorities, plus two districts opened by retirements.

There are a historically low number of so-called crossover districts: Only 13 Democrats represent districts Trump carried in 2024, while just three Republicans serve districts Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris carried.

Both committees are busy recruiting challengers and open-seat candidates and more retirements could come, so the competitive

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'Liberty Lost' podcast investigates Liberty Godparent Home claims

Podcast: Women faced pressure to place babies for adoption in exchange for LU scholarships

MADI KIRKMAN
The News & Advance

Liberty Godparent Home, a place for single pregnant women, is defending its organization after the "Liberty Lost" podcast said these women faced pressure to place their babies for adoption in exchange for scholarships to Liberty University.

Liberty Godparent Home said its "vital role in serving Central Virginia has been widely recognized for decades."

"We reject the claims of this tabloid podcast as irresponsible journalism designed to undermine this important work and to minimize the importance and effectiveness of pro-life orga-

nizations," Liberty Godparent Home said in a statement to The News & Advance.

Advertisements for the podcast series "Liberty Lost," which was released just before the three-year anniversary of the reversal of Roe v. Wade, can be seen on billboards around Lynchburg.

The U.S. Supreme Court overturned the constitutional right to an abortion in 2022, reversing



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PAIGE DINGLER, THE NEWS & ADVANCE
A billboard for the podcast "Liberty Lost" on Wards Road on July 4.

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