

RIVERFRONT PARK: Amphitheater announces soft opening, 1st concert. **A2**

HS BASKETBALL: Nelson County blitzes Gretna, extends winning streak. **B1**

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REDISTRICTING | LYNCHBURG AREA

Local officials speak against plan

Argue push by Dems minimizes the 'rural voice' in Washington

JUSTIN FAULCONER
The News & Advance

Republicans serving on the county boards of supervisors across Central Virginia are voicing strong opposition to the proposed redistricting of congressional seats, some calling it an attempt by the Democratic Party to minimize the voices of rural voters.

At Tuesday's Bedford County Board of Supervisors meeting, Supervisor Bob Davis referred to the redistricting map the Virginia Democratic Caucus released Feb. 4 as "gerrymandering." He suggested the board pass a resolution opposing it, as Lynchburg City Council and other local government boards have.

The Republican-majority



Davis



Faraldi

council voted in late January on a resolution expressing strong opposition to any attempt to amend the state Constitution to allow for mid-decade redistricting. It passed 6-1, with the lone Democrat on council, Sterling Wilder, voting against it.

Councilman Chris Faraldi said the redistricting plan Democrats are pushing is based on the premise

"we should build the legislative districts based on a party reference," and that under no circumstances is gerrymandering OK.

Democrats, who hold majorities in the state Senate and House of Delegates, are hoping to create more Democratic-friendly congressional districts in Virginia to help the party gain a majority in the U.S. House of Representatives in the midterm elections this fall. The party sees the effort as a way to counter the ongoing breaking of political norms by the Trump administration over the past year.

Democratic lawmakers are working to redistrict the state for a 10-1 advantage in its House delegation. A lower court in Tazewell County has challenged the plan, and the case now sits with the state Supreme Court.

The state high court will decide whether to allow a proposed amendment to the state Constitution to go to voters for a referendum in an April 21 special election that Gov. Abigail Spanberger recently agreed to allow.

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NELSON | U.S. 29-VIRGINIA 6



FILE PHOTO BY LEE LUTHER JR., FOR THE NEWS & ADVANCE

In this 2019 file photo, a dedication sign in honor of Edward L Embrey is shown posted on U.S. 29 near the intersection of Virginia 6.

'Scary' intersection a key focus

County officials, VDOT talk solutions to heavy wreck, traffic concerns

JUSTIN FAULCONER
The News & Advance

A traffic challenge for northern Nelson County is the intersection of U.S. 29 and Virginia 6 close to Tidbit Trail, according

to recent discussions between county officials and the Virginia Department of Transportation.

Connie Brennan, a Faber resident and former member of the Nelson County Board of Supervisors, recently described it as "a horrible mess."

Nelson's main industry is tourism. More visitors to the county bring more traffic, and Brennan feels some improvements are

needed there.

Nelson County Supervisor Jesse Rutherford agrees.

His work office is right at that intersection, about 10 miles north of Lovingson. Unfortunately, he said, he notices a lot of collisions there.

"We see a lot of accidents there, unfortunately. Something has got to be figured out," he said at a recent county board meeting.

"It's a scary place. A lot of accidents have been there in the past few months."

He discussed potential road upgrades with Robert Brown, VDOT's residency administrator for the county.

Brown told Rutherford about a crash on Dec. 16, the day of the county meeting, that involved a

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LYNCHBURG

Defendant to undergo 2nd sanity evaluation

Findings to determine if city man to be liable in double murder case

MARK HAND
The News & Advance

A Lynchburg judge on Wednesday granted a man charged with fatally shooting two people in September 2024 permission to undergo a second evaluation to determine his sanity at the time of the killings.

Nathaniel Pridemore, who faces charges in the murders of 36-year-old Christina Hamilton and 19-year-old Cash Gaudio, is expected to undergo the new evaluation at Central State Hospital, a maximum-security treatment facility in Petersburg.

The findings from the new evaluation could prove crucial in determining whether Pridemore can be held liable for the killings or should remain in a psychiatric hospital.



Pridemore

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MIKE KROPF, RICHMOND TIMES-DISPATCH

Virginia Superintendent Jenna Conway is seen at Martin Luther King Jr. Middle School in Richmond on Feb. 4.

STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Conway: Change to be deliberate

Says immediate focus is listening vs. abrupt reworking of systems

ANNA BRYSON
Richmond Times-Dispatch

RICHMOND — Jenna Conway, Virginia's new state superintendent of public instruction, has a big task ahead of her: lead the state's education department through the next four years.

What's unique for Conway's undertaking is the fact that the state agency she now leads, over the past four years, has gone

through substantial changes in leadership and staff. It also used several resources to implement a new school accountability system — a system that may undergo changes in the near future.

But first for Conway, who was appointed by Gov. Abigail Spanberger last month, is a statewide listening tour.

On Spanberger's first day in office Jan. 19, the governor signed an executive order directing the secretary of education and the superintendent of public instruction to conduct a statewide listening tour to hear

from students, parents, educators, superintendents and school leaders about the challenges and successes in the classroom.

"I'm most excited about getting out there and getting to hear from our principals, our educators, our families, our community stakeholders, and in some cases, even our students, as we think about: all right, how do we continue to elevate education and continue to evolve?" Conway said in a sit-down interview with the Richmond Times-Dispatch last week.

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Forecast • **B8**

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