



MAGGIE ALLWEIN/THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT PHOTOS

Energy costs concern residents

Lawmakers visit Norfolk to hear feedback on proposed merger

By Maggie Allwein
STAFF WRITER

Newport News resident Amanda Doughty was frank when it came to her worries about how the proposed merger between Dominion Energy and NextEra could impact customers.

“I’m concerned people are going to die, and I know that sounds really extreme,” Doughty said. “Some people rely on electricity to survive, medically, and without it, it puts lives in danger.”

Doughty, who currently works two jobs as a single mother, believes the merger would create a monopoly that could increase energy bills to the point more people are unable to afford to pay. She is not alone in her concerns about rising energy costs.



Above: Bill Johnson-Miles of Virginia Beach and Patrizia Zorzoli hold signs at the rally against the proposed merger between Dominion Energy and NextEra on Tuesday. **Top:** Lt. Gov. Ghazala Hashmi closes the second stop on her “Energy Costs Listening Tour” at the Slover Library in Norfolk on Tuesday after attendees shared their questions and thoughts about the proposed Dominion Energy and NextEra merger.

Lt. Gov. Ghazala Hashmi’s “Energy Costs Listening Tour” made a stop at Slover Library in Norfolk Tuesday night, giving Hampton Roads residents a chance to ask questions and voice concerns about the proposed merger. Over 100 Hampton Roads residents from across the region attended.

“Your presence here is indicative of your concerns,” Hashmi said to the crowd. “The proposed merger is not simply a corporate deal hammered out in boardrooms. It is a decision that’s going to impact electric bills, jobs and the energy future of Virginians.”

See **ENERGY** on Page A4

Poll finds trust in US government is falling

Public concern over accuracy of elections extends to midterms

By Amelia Thomson-Deveaux and Linley Sanders
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Americans are more skeptical of government information than they were a few years ago, with majorities now saying they have little or no trust in federal government information about elections and politics, foreign affairs or the environment, a new poll finds.

The survey from Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research and USAFacts shows that while mistrust of government information has grown since 2024, it’s also higher than it was at the end of President Donald Trump’s first term, underscoring how his recent attempts to dismantle parts of the federal bureaucracy may have affected public confidence in the executive branch, particularly among Democrats.

Those suspicions extend to the results of the coming midterm elections. Only 34% of U.S. adults trust government certifications of election results “a great deal” or “quite a bit,” which is down slightly from 40% in 2024. Certification is a typically routine process in which local and state officials confirm the vote count, but it’s become politicized since Trump lost the 2020 presidential election.

See **MIDTERMS** on Page A4

INSIDE

9/11 exhibit

A new exhibit at William & Mary’s Muscarelle Museum of Art aims to show how architecture can help heal a nation. **Page 3**

Maximizing mileage

Hypermilers deploy techniques aimed at maximizing fuel efficiency — and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Business, **Page 9**

VIRGINIA BEACH

City to seek new proposals for former MOCA property

By Stacy Parker
STAFF WRITER

VIRGINIA BEACH — City Council will incorporate an advisory group’s guidelines into a new round of solicitation for the reuse of the vacant, former Virginia Museum of Contemporary Art site near the convention center.

A mayor’s advisory panel met several times over the summer to learn about the city-owned property, consider its opportunities and constraints, listen to the community and develop recommended guidelines for its future, Emily Labows, the city’s cultural affairs director, told the council on Tuesday.

The seven-member panel was not asked to select an operator or recommend a specific use for the building. The City Council agreed Tuesday to issue a formal request for proposals to soon lease or buy the property, which is located at 2000 Parks Ave. and assessed at \$7 million.

As part of the panel’s informa-



The Virginia Museum of Contemporary Art in Virginia Beach. **STAFF FILE**

tion gathering process, the city hosted a community listening session in July at the site, and 162 people attended.

“The purpose was to provide the panel with a meaningful snapshot of community priorities, interests and concerns to consider as it developed its principles,” Labows said.

See **PROPERTY** on Page A4

WILLIAMSBURG

Eatery marks 9/11 with free dinners for first responders

Former volunteer firefighter gives opportunity to spend time with community

By Megan Roche
CORRESPONDENT

Mark Wright recalls turning on the news on Sept. 11, 2001, and seeing what was happening across the country.

A volunteer firefighter for the city of Williamsburg at the time, Wright rushed to the station, just in time to see the second plane hit the World Trade Center.

“I will never forget one of the firefighters saying we’re at war,” Wright said.

For Wright, the events of that day were more than something he watched unfold on television. As a volunteer firefighter, he was part of a community of first responders who understood the risks that come with the job and the sacrifices made by those who answered the call when others needed help.

In the years following the attacks, Wright wanted to find a



Williamsburg firefighters gather at the Jefferson Restaurant for the annual 9/11 Memorial Dinner in 2025. **EJ WRIGHT/COURTESY**

way to honor the first responders who continued to serve their communities.

The Wright family, which has owned and operated The Jefferson Restaurant and Mama Steve’s Pancake House for decades, allowed Mark to establish his own way of giving back. Since 2002, the Wright family has hosted a 9/11 Memorial Dinner for all on-duty first responders from Williams-

burg, James City County, York County and the Virginia State Police.

That first year, turnout was bigger than Wright had imagined. More than two decades later, attendance at the annual dinner hovers around 100 people, bringing together first responders from across the Historic Triangle.

See **DINNER** on Page A4

SUBSCRIPTION

Visit myaccount.pilotonline.com or call 757-446-9000 to sign up for a subscription. To place an ad, visit placeanad.pilotonline.com.

WEATHER FORECAST

TODAY H: 93 L: 76 **FRI.** H: 84 L: 74 **SAT.** H: 82 L: 73
FULL WEATHER REPORT A14

INDEX

Advice B8
Business A9
Classified A13
Comics B10
Lottery A2
Obituaries A12
Puzzles B11, 12
Sports B1
TV B9

