



SCS Officials Developing May 2026 Excess Levy

Rebecca Stalnaker

Hinton News

HINTON, W.Va. (Hinton News) — Summers County Schools has begun the formal process of developing an excess levy call for the May 2026 election, school officials announced.

The district is currently seeking community input to help determine which specific items and projects should be included in the final levy proposal. An on-

line survey, which serves as a follow-up to a broader community poll conducted last fall, was open to the public through Jan. 12.

“Our ongoing goal is to provide the students and community of Summers County with the strongest possible education system,” the district said in a statement posted to social media. “Your feedback is an essential part of that effort.”

In West Virginia, an excess levy is a local tax measure that provides funding for school operations, programs, and services that are not fully covered by the state’s funding formula. Unlike a bond, which is typically used for long-term construction projects, levies generally support day-to-day costs such as instructional materials, technology, student safety, and extracurricular activities.

Under state law, school excess levies must be approved by a majority of voters and can remain in effect for up to five years before requiring renewal.

District officials noted that the fall survey provided a foundation for the current planning phase. The new survey aims to narrow down the community’s priorities to ensure the final “levy call” reflects the specific needs and values of Summers County residents.

“Greenbrier Ghost” Takes Center Stage in Wisconsin World Premiere

Rebecca Stalnaker

Hinton News

MADISON, WI (Hinton News) — The haunting legend of Greenbrier County’s own Zona Heaster Shue is finding a new voice over 800 miles away. Madison Opera has announced the world premiere of “Everlasting Faint,” a full-length opera based on the famous West Virginia “Greenbrier Ghost” case.

The production, featuring music by Scott Gadel and a libretto by Sandra Flores-Strand, will debut at the Capitol Theater in Madison, Wisconsin, with performances on Feb. 13 and 15.

The opera stays true to the historical events of 1897. It follows the story of Elva (Zona), whose sudden death was initially dismissed by a doctor as an “everlasting faint.” The plot centers on Elva’s mother, Mary, who refuses to accept the diagnosis.

In a tale familiar to West Virginians, the opera depicts Elva’s ghost appearing to her mother to reveal the grim truth: her husband, Trout, had broken her neck.

This historical case remains famous as the only known instance in U.S. history where a ghost’s “testimony” helped secure a murder conviction.

“Sandra and I wrote this opera to be deeply emotional and exciting, with the big dramatic sweep of classic operas but

in a distinctively 21st-century American style,” says composer Scott Gadel.

While the supernatural elements drive the plot, the production also aims to capture the atmosphere of a rural Appalachian community. The score ranges from folk-song-inspired choruses to dramatic arias, utilizing the Madison Opera Chorus and members of the Madison Symphony Orchestra to bring the small West Virginia town to life.

New Year, New Laws: Sweeping Changes Take Effect in Virginia and West Virginia

David Hodge

Hinton News

Virginia/West Virginia (Hinton News) - As the calendar has turned to 2026, residents in Virginia and West Virginia face a broad array of new laws impacting daily life, employment, consumer rights, and public health. From minimum wage hikes to sweeping consumer protections and landmark health initiatives, the legislative changes reflect both states’ responses to evolving policy priorities and social concerns.

In Virginia, workers celebrating the New Year may notice a modest rise in their paychecks. The state’s minimum wage increased from \$12.41 to \$12.77 per hour, in line with cost-of-living ad-

justments mandated by state law. Although incremental, the change is part of a series of scheduled hikes designed to boost income for lower-wage workers and address inflationary pressures. Unemployment benefits saw a concurrent in-

crease, as weekly payments climbed by \$52, providing a measure of financial relief for Virginians seeking work or experiencing transitions in

employment.

Beyond labor policy, Virginia enacted notable expansions to consumer protection and personal privacy, particularly in digital communication and social media. The Virginia Telephone Privacy Protection Act now requires telemarketers to honor opt-out requests, signaled by the words “stop” or “unsubscribe,” for at least a decade. Telemarketing calls are restricted to the hours between 8 a.m. and 9 p.m., and callers must properly identify themselves during solicitations. The goal of this legislation is to give Virginians greater control over unwanted advertising communications, responding to complaints about intrusive phone calls and text messages.

A transformative area of legislation targets the online safety of minors. New rules under the Consumer Data Protection Act and related statutes mandate that social media companies implement neutral age screening mechanisms to identify users younger than 16 years of age. For these minors, daily access to social media platforms is capped at one hour, though parents retain the ability to adjust limits. These measures, passed by the state’s General Assembly and signed into law in 2025, represent an effort to tackle growing concerns around digital well-being and youth internet usage.

However, legal challenges from major technology industry groups, citing First Amendment grounds, are ongoing and may influence future enforcement.

On the public health front, health-care consumers in Virginia benefit from provisions eliminating cost-sharing for certain diagnostics. Insurance companies are now prohibited from imposing copayments, coinsurance, or

deductibles for breast cancer screenings, including mammograms, MRIs, and ultrasounds, as well as prostate cancer screenings. The new measures are intended to increase early detection, cut financial barriers to preventative care, and align state guidelines with national cancer society recommendations.

Food safety, especially for the youngest Virginians, is another legislative focus. The Baby Food Protection Act now obligates baby food manufacturers to regularly test products for toxic levels of heavy metals such as lead, arsenic, mercury, and cadmium. Results must be made available to consumers through QR codes on packaging and published online. The law also directs the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to assess enforcement mechanisms and recommend further regulatory action if necessary.

Additional legal updates require courts to furnish, upon request, itemized statements for individuals ordered to pay fines, fees, restitution, or other costs stemming from traffic or criminal violations. Hospitals, under Malcolm’s Law, must now include fentanyl screening in the array of urine drug tests used for patient diagnosis, addressing the ongoing opioid crisis with an expanded diagnostic approach.

Meanwhile, in West Virginia, lawmakers also targeted lifestyle, consumer, and insurance reforms with the new legislative slate. Among the most debated measures is the restriction of soda purchases with Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. Effective January 1, 2026, recipients can no longer use SNAP to buy regular, diet, or zero-calorie sodas. This policy, approved following a state waiver and public feedback cam-

paign, aims to encourage healthier buying choices and address mounting concerns around obesity and related chronic health conditions. Residents affected by the change were invited to offer feedback through a Department of Human Services survey, with input collected through the end of 2025.

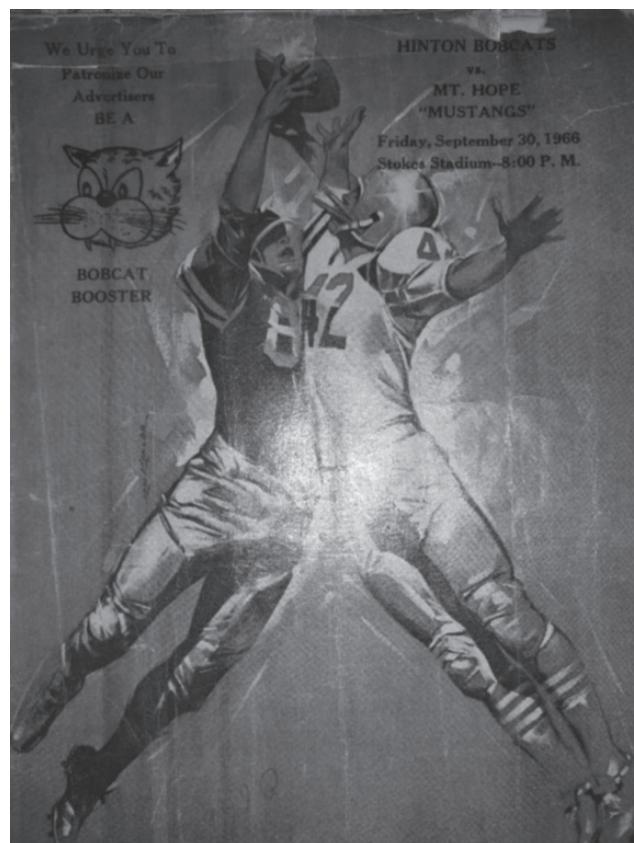
Insurance regulation also underwent significant changes. Senate Bill 800, signed into law the previous April, now compels insurance companies that are part of holding company systems to file annual group capital calculations and, where appropriate, liquidity stress test results. The legislation further ensures that all corporate records and data held by any affiliate remain the property and under the control of the insurer. These requirements, reflective of broader national regulatory trends, seek to shore up financial transparency and risk management across the state’s insurance sector.

Taxpayers in West Virginia may also encounter changes in state income tax calculations due to the expiration of key federal tax provisions. These modifications, stemming from the broader rollback of the federal Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, will likely result in higher taxable income and increase tax liabilities for some state residents.

As 2026 unfolds, the dual set of reforms in the two Virginias are poised to alter the consumer, public health, and employment landscapes. Residents are advised to familiarize themselves with the new statutes to ensure compliance and maximize the benefits offered by the changes, ranging from a healthier food supply and safer digital environments for children, to expanded healthcare access and increased financial transparency within the insurance industry.



A Peek into Summers County's Past: Bobcat Boosters



William Jones
Hinton News

SUMMERS COUNTY W.Va. (Hinton News) - I received this Hinton Bobcats vs. Mr. Hope "Mustangs" Friday, September 30, 1966, Stokes Stadium 8 p.m. advertisement game pamphlet back in the fall. This item was included with Melvin Harris' collection of Pence Springs documents that his wife, Kay, sent to me. The front of the booklet also says, "We Urge You To Patronize Our Advertisers BE A BOBCAT BOOSTER."

This was only 60 years ago in a modern sense, but it shows what a different cultural time from then to now we live in.

Where everyone had a "sense of community," this was just one way it was shown at that time. For instance, local football games are traditionally always held on Friday nights. So much so that in the United States, there has become an informal "hierarchy of football" on that day of the week on a local level.

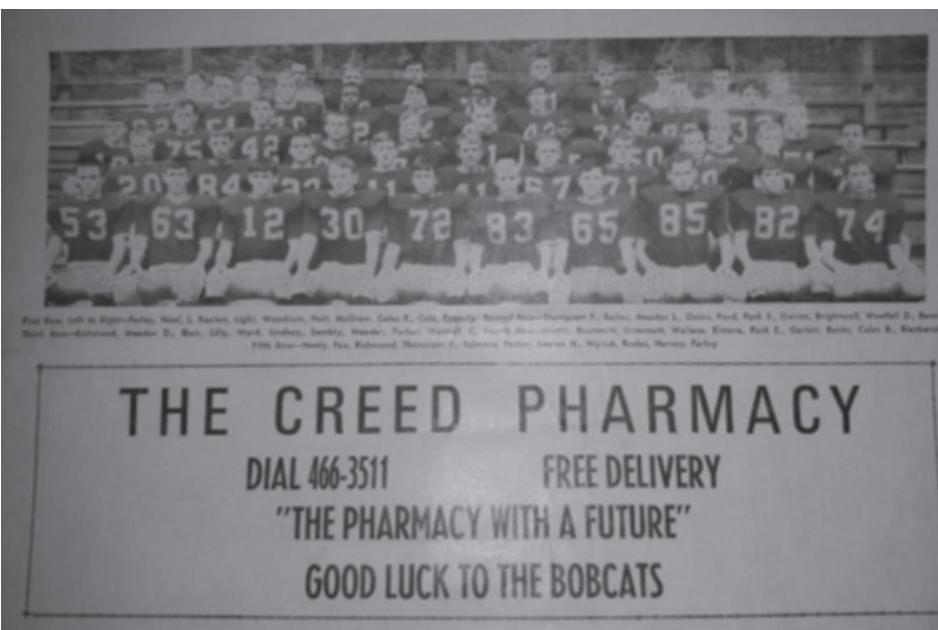
"Friday Nights are traditionally reserved for high school football. For many communities, especially in small towns, these games are major so-

cial events, inspiring books and popular TV series, such as "Friday Night Lights." College football games are held on Saturday nights. NFL games are held on Sunday.

Local advertisements include: State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Company in Hinton, John Doyle Hinton Market, Doyle Hardware in Hinton, Hix Merchandise Co. in Hix, Bass Lake Park, B.P.O. Elks. No. 821, J.L. Massie Insurance Agency in Hinton, Bridge Street Esso Station, Bellepoint Super Market, Mammoth Amusement Company on Greenbrier Drive.

Raleigh Grocery Company in Mabscott, Cox's Department Store in Hinton, The Sewing Basket, Inc., The First National Bank in Hinton, Fort Pitt Shoe Store in Hinton, and the Temple Sweet Shop, "Compliments of a friend."

"Compliments of Mary Lou, Billy George, Jane and Robin", Vicky's Beauty Salon in Hinton, Jack Holt Real



THE CREED PHARMACY
DIAL 466-3511 FREE DELIVERY
"THE PHARMACY WITH A FUTURE"
GOOD LUCK TO THE BOBCATS

Hardware, Bluestone Products Heating
Market, Coaches Oil in Hinton, West
Place, "Compliments Virginia Water Com-
of Webb Brothers" pany, Park Avenue
Creed Pharmacy. Service Station in
Summers Finance Hinton.

Co., H. N. Ford Inc., Big 4 Drug Store, Hinton, Hub Cloth-
Inc., Silo Car Wash in Bellepoint, Willey Broth-
ers Well Drill-
ing and Excavation,
Kesler's, C. S. Dillons
Nationwide Insurance,
Nu-Way Clean-
ers in Hinton, Meadow-
ows Furniture Co.,
Ronald Meadows Fu-
neral Parlors, Willow
Wood Country Club,
S and W Paint Store,
Atlantic and Pacific
Tea Co., "Compli-
ments of Jimmy and
Mary Carol Meadow-
ows", D. B. Abshire Co., Hinton Insur-
Motor Sales, Esso

Purity Maid.
Allen Motor Co. in
Hinton, Radio Sta-
tion WMTD, Bri-
ers Home Furniture
Co., Hinton Insur-
ance Agency, Willeys

Hardware, John's
Dairy-Ett, Hellems
Cash Store, J. B.
Wingfield Justice of
the Peace and Jes-
se L. Romanoello
Constable, Summers
County, "Compli-
ments of The O'Far-
rells Neal - Margar-
et, Timmy - Neil,
Mary Lynn - Colleen,
Shawn - Peggy, Na-
tional Bank of Sum-
mers,

"Compliments of
Fat Stuff, Woody's
Barber Shop, "Com-

pliments of The
Clinebells Tom,
Betty, Steve, Dave
and Joe, The Hin-
ton Hospital, Loyal
Order of Moose No.
993, Hinton High
Cheerleaders Lin
Willey, Tamara Mc-
Callister, Lida Ward,
Donna Woodrum,
Martha Meadows,
Susie Surber and
Ann Farrell.

FOR RENT NO WAITING LIST

One Bedroom,
Section 8 Apts.
Elderly 62+
Handicapped or
Disabled.
All Utilities Included.
On site laundry
facilities.

Apply at
Hinton House Apts.
495 Stokes Drive.
Office Hours:
M - F (8 - 4) 304-466-5299

The Hinton News Dining Guide

To Reserve Ad Space Call
681.293.1173
Or Email tia@wvdn.com



Hours

Open Monday - Sunday
10:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.

HC 78 BOX 6, Hinton, WV
Call: 304-466-1700

Come in for lunch or dinner

- Open Daily
- Lunch and dinner specials
- Desserts are made fresh

THE MARKET
COURTHOUSE SQUARE
(304)466-6626

RITZWV.COM • (304)466-6684

TICKETS
\$6 regular admission
\$5 students & seniors
\$4 matinee

Enjoy Blockbuster
Movies Every
Friday through Monday!

Gingerbread Day at War Ridge Free Will Baptist Church



building and decorating their gingerbread houses. The picture shows the kids standing around their completed houses. Front row, left to right: Jacob Brogan, Havyn Salmons, and Karsyn Fox; back row: Hailey Matney, Brooke Fox, Sydney Fox, Jayson Little, Maddie Spinel- li, Jayden Little, and Brystal Little.

While the adults cleaned up and bagged the houses, the kids went on to play a game of "Who Wrapped This", where they unwrapped a cling wrap ball filled with candy and small toys while wearing oven mitts. They had 30 seconds to try to unwrap some of the goodies before they had to pass it to the next person. The ball continued around the table until the final prize in the middle was claimed.

Next, a snack of hot chocolate and oven S'Mores (as if they didn't have enough

sugar already); followed by another craft where they made a "Beaded Wreath Ornament". They then proceeded to more games, "Hungry, Hungry Reindeer," where kids wore plastic cups on their hands as hooves and had to pick up mini-marshmallows and put them on their plates as reindeer food (see picture).

The rest of the afternoon was occupied with more games, including "Stick Cup Stack," where they had to use chopsticks to move and stack plastic cups, and the Left/ Right game, where the story of the first Christmas was read while kids passed unopened gifts either to the right or to the left, depending on what the story said. When the story was over, they were able to open and keep the gift they ended up with. The kids completed two more crafts and iced

and decorated a half dozen sugar cookies. The kids had a good time on their first day of the Christmas break and were picked up at 4:30 by their parents.

A special thank you goes out to game "referees" Charles and Halie Osborne (pictured goofing around after the "Reindeer Antler" game) and our other adult volunteers Bonnie Galford, Crystal Matney, and Penny Matney.



WAR RIDGE W.Va. (Hinton News) - On Friday, December 19, the War Ridge Free Will Baptist Church held a "Gingerbread Day" for the kids in our Kids Club. Our day started at 10 a.m., and while waiting for everyone to arrive, the kids played one

craft stick held in their mouth. The second, "Jingle Bell Toss", was a team game where the two teams raced to see which team would be the first to throw one bell into each of the 11 cups arranged in the shape of a Christmas tree.

Everyone enjoyed a lunch of walking tacos and then played "Holiday Candy Divide," where they had to separate red and green M&M's by color using only a straw. This was followed by the "Reindeer Antler" game, where each team had to blow up 10 balloons and stuff them into the legs of pantyhose. The team whose leader was the first to don the antlers won a prize.

Once everyone had arrived, they started a craft, making a pom-pom Christmas Tree ornament. After that, they played two more games. The first, "Jingle Bell Balance," required them to balance bells on a small

ADVERTISE WITH US

Call or Email Us to Place Your Ad Today!

681-293-1173
tia@wvndn.com

THE HINTON NEWS

For All Your Plumbing Needs, Contact
Donnie Zimmerman Plumbing
304-222-2630
Backflow Installer & Tester
12 Years Experience
10% Discount For Seniors • Free Estimates
Now accepting all major credit cards.

THE HINTON NEWS

WEB: hintonnews.com
Postal Permit #USPS-246-180

SINCE 1877
© 2025 THE HINTON NEWS

Published by
ECENT CORPORATION
188 Foster Street,
Lewisburg, WV 24901

Publisher:
Scot Refsland, Ph.D.
publisher@wvndn.com

Editor:
Rebecca Stalnaker
rebecca@wvndn.com

Director of Operations:
Susan Smith-Linton
susan@wvndn.com

Advertising Rep:
Tia Mattox
tia@wvndn.com

Circulation Manager:
Heather Felts
heather@wvndn.com

Please contact the Hinton News Office for subscription information.
#304-466-0005

POSTMASTER:
Please send change of address to publication.

SUBSCRIBE TO THE HINTON NEWS!

USPS Postal Delivery Rates

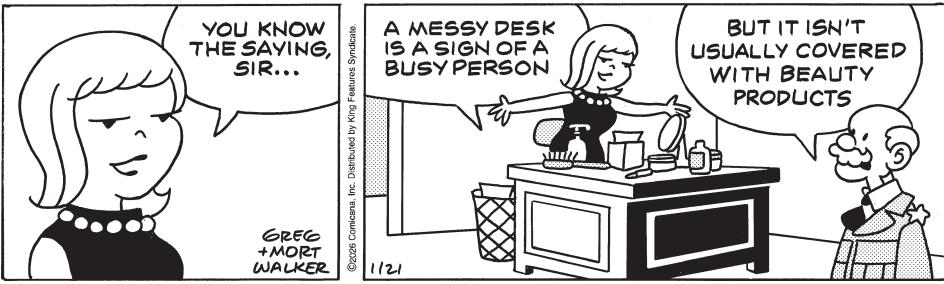
In-State Delivered Subscription (Annual) \$72.00

Out-of-State Delivered Subscription (Annual) \$75.00

Call The Hinton News Office at
304-466-0005
to Subscribe or subscribe online
[at hintonnews.com](http://hintonnews.com)

ENTERTAINMENT & COMICS PAGE

Beetle Bailey



Blondie



Daddy Daze



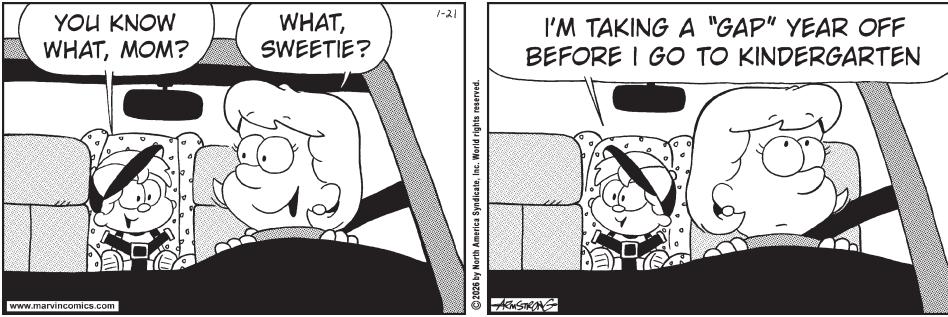
Dustin



Hi and Lois



Marvin



Mutts



Zits



SHEFFER CROSSWORD

ACROSS	DOWN
1 May honoree	14 Pencil filler
4 Citrus drink	15 Mermaid's home
7 Nickelodeon's "Explorer"	19 Goal
8 Falls into a chair	20 100 percent
10 Put through a sieve, as potatoes	21 The Gem State
11 Sea off Sicily	22 Two-point shots
13 Cafeteria meals for students	23 "Star Trek" helmsman
16 Darjeeling, e.g.	24 Veterans
17 Poor	25 Curved line
18 Shock partner	26 — Iuego!"
19 Literary collections	28 Sports-cast offering
20 Length times width	29 Paratrooper's need
21 Trojan War story	30 One with a pitchfork
23 Sun-powered	31 Part of Q.E.D.
25 Eve's mate	32 Visual communication syst.
26 Ship's frame	34 Numbered rds.
	35 Fine cotton

Solution time: 23 mins.

H	E	R	S	P	E	I	S	W	S	A	P
O	G	E	I	N	S	C	A	R	L		
H	A	C	I	E	N	D	A	O	L	I	O
O	D	D	J	O	B	A	M	U	L	E	T
D	I	R	T	L	E	I	N	A	C	R	E
A	R	C	S	L	Y	P	E	N	N	E	
O	P	E	R	A	T	E	A	G	E		
R	E	S	W	S	E	L	S				
R	E	S	W	S	E	L	S				
R	E	S	W	S	E	L	S				
R	E	S	W	S	E	L	S				
R	E	S	W	S	E	L	S				

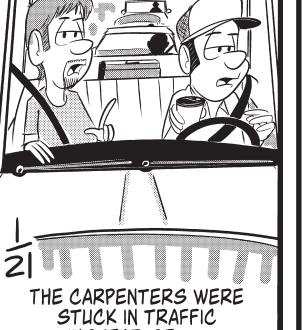
Last Wednesday's Answer
(Answers Next Wednesday)

JUMBLE

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

N	P	T	A	L
○	○	○	○	○
M	I	E	R	G
○	○	○	○	○
I	V	N	E	I
○	○	○	○	○
U	C	D	S	I
○	○	○	○	○

Get the free JUST JUMBLE app • Follow us on Facebook



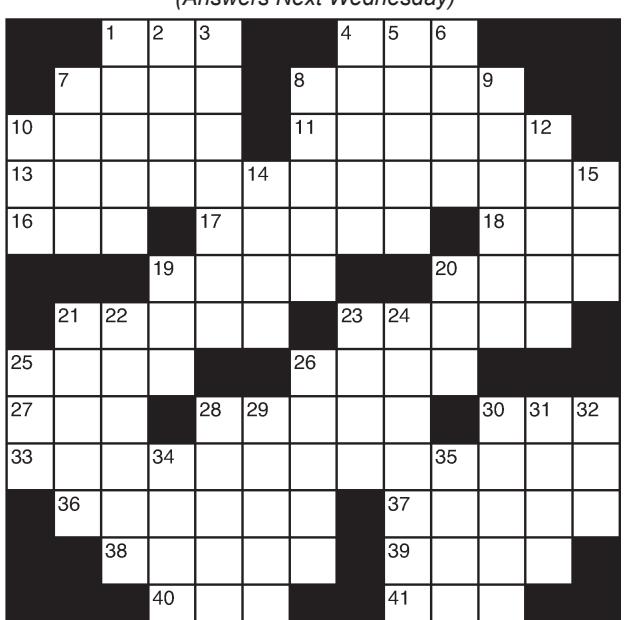
Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.



(Today's Answers Next Wednesday)

© 2026 Tribune Content Agency, LLC
All Rights Reserved.

Last Wednesday's Answers

Jumbles: GLOAT AUDIT UNWISE VISION
Answer: The long line to get into the bagel shop was proof that the food was — OUTSTANDING

SUDOKU PUZZLE

King Classic Sudoku

4			2	7	9			
9	8	4						
7			4	8	1			
6		4	9	7	8	1		
1								
8	4	2		9	7	6		
3	2	7		6				
4			6	5	1	8		
8	6	1				7		

Difficulty: ★★★

1/21

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 grid contains the digits 1 through 9. That means that no number is repeated in any row, column, or box.

(Today's Answers
Next Wednesday)Answer To Last
Wednesday's
Puzzle →

4	6	3	7	5	1	9	8	2
7	2	1	8	3	9	5	4	6
8	9	5	2	6	4	3	1	7
9	5	6	1	8	2	4	7	3
2	4	7	6	9	3	1	5	8
1	3	8	4	7	5	2	6	9
3	7	9	5	1	6	8	2	4
5	8	4	3	2	7	6	9	1
6	1	2	9	4	8	7	3	5

Difficulty: ★★★

1/14

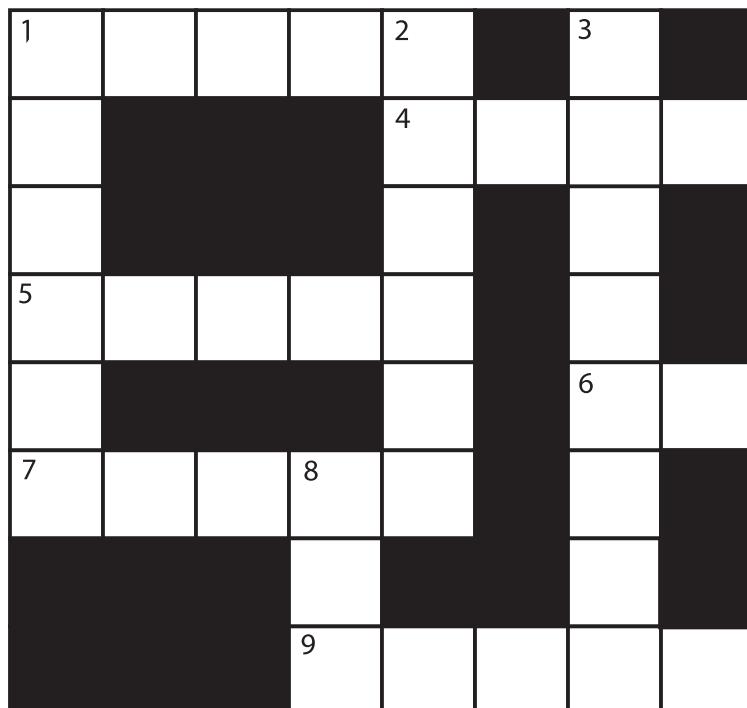


Food FACT:

This soup is traditionally smooth and creamy and often begins with a shellfish stock.

Answer: Bisque

Crossword Puzzle



ACROSS

- Related to onions
- Passage of minutes
- Reason
- Artificial intelligence
- Liquid meals
- Browned bread

DOWN

- Scoops liquid
- Bases for soups
- Importance given
- Cooking vessel

1. Ladles 2. Stocks 3. Emphasis 8. Pot
Down

1. Leeks 4. Time 5. Logic 6. AI 7. Soups

Across
Answers:

DAY IN HISTORY



1789: The first American novel is printed in Boston.

1915: Kiwanis International is founded in Detroit.

1948: The Flag of Quebec is adopted and flown for the first time over the National Assembly of Quebec.

NEW WORD CHOWDER

thick, hearty soup defined by its chunky texture

“How they say that in...”

English: Soup
Spanish: Sopa
Italian: Minestra
French: Soupe
German: Suppe

Did You KNOW?

The earliest archaeological evidence of consuming soup dates back to 6,000 BC, when the soup featured hippopotamus meat, sparrows, lentils, and vegetables.

Get the PICTURE?



Can you guess what the bigger picture is?

Answer: Noodle soup

Rainelle
MEDICAL CENTER
Excellent Health Care Right At Home

Alderson Medical Center
101 Railroad Avenue,
Alderson, WV 24910
• (304) 445-3140

Summers County Health Center
37 Bobcat Drive, Hinton, WV
25951 • (304) 660-1155

Rainelle Medical Center Family Medicine And Pediatrics
176 Medical Center Drive,
Rainelle, WV 25962
• (304) 438-6188

& Rainelle Medical Center Pharmacy (304) 438-6186
& Rainelle Dental Center
(304) 438-1922

Lewisburg Pediatrics And Family Health Center
2140 North Jefferson St., Suite
200, Lewisburg, WV 24901
• (304) 660-1155

Maxwelton Health Center & Pharmacy

390 Industrial Park Road,
Maxwelton, WV 24957
• (681) 318-3610

& Maxwelton Dental Center
(681) 318-3611

Midland Trail Health Center
26709 Midland Trail, Hico, WV
25854 • (304) 969-8080

Lewisburg Health Center
296 Fair Street, Lewisburg, WV
24901 • (304) 647-4747

Meadow Bridge Clinic
1502 Meadow Bridge Road,
Meadow Bridge, WV 25976
• (304) 484-7755

White Sulphur Springs Health Center
128 Community Lane,
White Sulphur Springs, WV 24996
• (304) 956-2577

Eastern Greenbrier Health Center
595 Spartan Lane, Lewisburg, WV
24901 • (304) 645-1052

Rupert Health Care Center
458 Greenbrier St., Rupert, WV
25984 • (304) 632-6602

WVDA Confirms Case of Avian Influenza in Backyard Flock in Greenbrier County

CHARLESTON W.Va. (Hinton News) - The West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA) has confirmed the presence of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in a backyard flock in Greenbrier County. This is only the fourth detection of HPAI in domestic birds in West Virginia since the global outbreak began in early 2022.

The diagnosis was confirmed following a field investigation, sample

collection, and testing at WVDA's Animal Health NAHLN lab in Moorefield. The affected premise has been placed under quarantine to protect nearby flocks and ensure the continued safety of the commercial food supply.

"This case is an important reminder that backyard poultry flocks can be at risk at any time," said West Virginia Commissioner of Agriculture Kent Leonhardt. "All poultry owners, regard-

less of flock size, should remain vigilant by keeping birds contained, restricting access to their flocks, and avoiding contact with wild birds and waterfowl to help prevent the spread of this virus."

The WVDA has notified industry partners and state health officials and will continue following established response protocols. The agency remains committed to prompt communication to help mitigate the risk of additional spread.

Avian influenza is an airborne respiratory virus that spreads through respiratory secretions, manure, and contaminated surfaces.

Wild migratory waterfowl serve as natural carriers, putting outdoor and backyard flocks at increased risk. While HPAI has been detected in some mammal species, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention notes that the public health risk remains low. Properly

cooking poultry and eggs remains safe.

To prevent the spread of HPAI, WVDA urges poultry owners to:

Keep backyard flocks enclosed or under cover to prevent contact with wild birds.

Remove or secure outdoor feed that may attract wildlife.

Limit and record movement of people, vehicles, and animals on the property.

Restrict access to es-

Avoid visiting other poultry operations or mixing birds from different locations.

Disinfect equipment, footwear, and tools after contact with birds.

Isolate any ill animals and contact a veterinarian immediately.

Poultry owners should report unusual death loss, a sudden drop in egg production, or any sick domestic birds to the WVDA Animal Health Division at 304-558-2214.

A Deadly Respiratory Season: Virginia and West Virginia Grapple with Severe Flu and Pneumonia Outbreaks

David Hodge
Hinton News

RICHMOND, Va. (Hinton News) — Virginia is bracing for its most dangerous flu season in years as a new, fast-spreading strain of influenza is fueling a surge in hospitalizations, deaths, and pediatric cases across the Commonwealth and the Alleghany Highlands, public health officials warn.

On top of a mounting wave of pneumonia cases, particularly among young children, the region is contending with the double threat of a severe flu and variant, along with a spike in respiratory illnesses that experts say could strain local hospitals during the winter months.

"We're seeing an alarming increase in both influenza and pneumonia cases this fall and winter, especially among our most vulnerable populations," said Dr. Hayden, professor at the University of Virginia School of Medicine. "The new H3N2 subclade K strain is spreading quickly, and available vaccines appear to be a limited match."

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the current flu season, dominated by the H3N2 virus and its offshoot, has resulted in more than 900,000 hospitalizations nationwide since October 2024. Virginia alone has reported more than 60 flu-related deaths as of December, including pediatric fatalities, while Alleghany Highlands

medical centers are reporting increased admissions for both flu and pneumonia, straining local healthcare resources.

Public health authorities point to several factors compounding the crisis. Only about 31% of Virginians have received a flu shot this season, a troubling statistic as the new variant proves especially severe for the elderly, young children, and those with chronic illnesses.

"In the Alleghany Highlands, where we serve a large population of seniors and families with children, the low vaccination rate is deeply concerning," said a spokesperson for the Virginia Department of Health. "It puts our community at heightened risk for both complications and further outbreaks."

The CDC and the Virginia Department of Health confirmed that schools throughout the state, including the Alleghany Highlands' school districts, have reported clusters of respiratory illnesses, including pneumonia, with some schools confirming multiple students hospitalized. Data from November showed emergency departments recorded a substantial spike in the number of pneumonia cases compared to the previous two years, with special concern for children ages 0 to 17 and adults ages 18 to 64.

Health experts explain that the H3N2 subclade K strain's emergence

has rendered current flu vaccines only a partial match. In adult populations, early estimates from the United Kingdom suggest vaccine effectiveness rates as low as 32-39%, while nasal spray vaccines for children fare better, holding a 72-75% effectiveness rate.

"Vaccines may not be a perfect shield this year, but they remain the best line of defense," Dr. Hayden said. "They still help reduce the risk of serious illness, hospitalization, or even death, especially for those most at risk."

Besides influenza, outbreaks of pneumonia linked to viruses such as rhinoviruses, enteroviruses, and Mycoplasma pneumoniae are driving a dramatic rise in respiratory-related emergency visits.

Pediatricians in the Alleghany Highlands have observed waves of sick children in local clinics and urgent care centers, with some schools implementing temporary measures to contain the spread.

Symptoms of influenza can include a sudden onset of fever, cough, sore throat, headaches, muscle aches, and fatigue. Vomiting and diarrhea are more frequent in children. Pneumonia can manifest with cough, fever, chest pain, and trouble breathing, and, if untreated, both can result in life-threatening complications.

The CDC warns that people with flu are most contagious in the first

three to four days of children and those with their illness, with young weakened immune sys-

Deadly Respiratory » #7

Jesus, The Way: Introducing Jesus As The Way

(Part 3)

by Mark A. Copeland

https://executableoutlines.com/topical_series/jesus-the-way-guide/jtw_01.html

Last week, we saw Jesus as the way to forgiveness of sins. We ended by saying Jesus is the way to God.

As we have already noted, Jesus claimed to be the only way to the Father: **Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." (John 14:6)**

Why emphasize this point? Because one does not truly experience what it means to have "eternal life" without having an intimate relationship with the Father, as well as with the Son. And this is exactly what Jesus has to offer us! As He mentioned in His prayer before His trial and crucifixion:

Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent." (John 17:1-3)

Yes, that "eternal life" Jesus offers to us includes "knowing" the Father as well as the Son!

The way to a better life, the way to forgiveness of sins, the way to God...what wonderful blessings! But there is more. Jesus is also...

THE WAY OUT OF RELIGIOUS CONFUSION

Consider the plight of many who wish to follow Jesus. They are confused and even repelled by the multitude of different churches and conflicting doctrines being offered by those who profess to be His church.

But one does not have to be a part of this confusion! Jesus Himself certainly does not approve it. He taught us that:

"Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand." (Matthew 12:25)

Before His betrayal and arrest, we find Jesus praying fervently...

"I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me." (John 17:20-23)

How can we even begin to hope to have this unity of which Jesus spoke? It helps to remember that Jesus promised to build HIS church:

"And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." (Matthew 16:18)

Despite the efforts of man and Satan to destroy it, or otherwise change it, they shall not prevail! Even today, when someone obeys the words of Jesus Christ, they are added by the Lord Himself to His church:

...praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved. (Acts 2:47)

Continued next week.

Paid for by Shockley Hill church of Christ.

We meet at 3293 Tug Creek Mountain Road

Sunday Morning Worship 9:30

Bible Study 10:30

Worship 11:15

Wednesday Bible Study 6:30

We would love to have you come and study with us.

304-466-5907, 304-445-5115, 304-860-7179

LEGAL NOTICE

PUBLIC SERVICE
COMMISSION
OF WEST VIRGINIA
CHARLESTON
CASE NO. 25-0859-E-IRP
APPALACHIAN POWER
COMPANY

Integrated Resource Plan
filed pursuant to the May
23, 2025 Commission Order
in GO 183.15.

and
CASE NO. 25-0860-E-IRP
WHEELING POWER COMPANY

Integrated Resource Plan
filed pursuant to the May
23, 2025 Commission Order
in GO 183.15.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC
COMMENT AND EVIDENTIARY HEARINGS

Appalachian Power Company and Wheeling Power Company (the Companies), public utilities, each filed with the Public Service Commission of West Virginia an Integrated Resource Plan on October 1, 2025, pursuant to W. Va. Code § 24-2-19(e). The Companies furnish electric service to approximately 460,921 customers in their service territories in the counties of Boone, Brooke, Cabell, Clay, Fayette, Greenbrier, Jackson, Kanawha, Lincoln, Logan, Marshall, Mason, McDowell, Mercer, Mingo, Monroe, Nicholas, Ohio, Putnam, Raleigh, Roane, Summers, Wayne, Wetzel, and Wyoming.

The Commission will conduct an evidentiary hearing beginning at 9:30 a.m. on May 13, 2026, and continuing through May 14, 2026, if necessary, in the Howard M. Cunningham Hearing Room, Public Service Commission of West Virginia, 201 Brooks Street, Charleston, West Virginia. Interested persons should monitor the Commission's web docket and website because the evidentiary hearing may be cancelled or changed for good cause.

Anyone desiring to intervene and act as a party in either of these cases should file a Petition to Intervene on or before January 15, 2026, complying with the rules on intervention set forth in the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure.

Written comments regarding the IRPS may be submitted by mail or hand delivery to Executive Secretary, P. O. Box 812, Charleston, West Virginia 25323 or online at <http://www.psc.state.wv.us> by clicking on "Submit A Comment" in the left column and following the directions provided.

All written comments should be marked as pertaining to Case No. 25-0859-E-IRP (Appalachian Power) and/or Case No. 25-0860-E-IRP (Wheeling Power). All written comments should be filed on or before April 22, 2026.

APPALACHIAN POWER
COMPANY & WHEELING
POWER COMPANY

(21ja)

A Deadly Respiratory Season (Continued from Page 6)

virus for even longer. Health officials emphasize that treatment with prescription antiviral drugs can reduce the severity and duration of the flu, particularly when initiated within two days of symptom onset.

To stem the rising tide, state and local health departments have launched public information cam-

paigns urging residents to get vaccinated, practice respiratory hygiene, and seek medical attention for severe symptoms.

"Simple steps like staying home if you're sick, wearing a mask in crowded places, and washing hands frequently can protect you, your family, and others in the com-

munity," said the Virginia Department of Health. "We especially want to help prepare the elderly, children, and those with underlying health issues of this potential threat."

The Alleghany Highlands and the greater Virginia region are closely monitoring hospital capacity, as the holidays and school reopenings

are expected to drive case numbers even higher. Health experts urge parents, educators, and care facility operators to prioritize both routine and seasonal vaccines for children and at-risk residents, and for clinicians to consider early use of antivirals in high-risk populations.

As public health agen-

cies continue close surveillance on rising case numbers, residents are advised to follow local recommendations and stay alert for updates.

"Getting vaccinated as soon as possible remains the single most important action people can do to protect themselves and their families," says Virology experts.

**Dear Recycle Lady**

Dear Recycle Lady,
The Christmas wreaths that I used this year were made of pine on a heavy wire frame. They were beautiful, but what do I do with them now? Are the wire frames recyclable? Time to Take Them Down

Dear Time to Take Them Down,
Yes, the wire frames are recyclable. Just remove the pine and take the wire to the Recycling Center. Be sure to use sharp wire cutters and wear garden gloves when removing the pine from the wire form as pine needles are very sharp. Better yet, use the intact wreaths as an insulating mulch in your garden. Not only will this add winter protection for your outdoor plants, but by spring, the pine will decompose and be much easier to remove. Plus,

the decomposed pine needles will add nutrients to your garden. The wire may be rusty, but it still recycles. If you had a commercially made wreath with decorations on it, those decorations should be removed and can be used next year to make your own wreath or to embellish a purchased wreath. Have you ever made a wreath from the branches trimmed from your live Christmas tree before you put it up? Next year, use the greenery from the tree to cover the wire frames, add the decorations and bows you saved this year, and you have a new wreath. That's a savings for you and a good deal for the environment!

Dear Recycle Lady,
The week or so before Christmas, newspapers were filled with colorful advertisements. Some

of the ads were definitely printed on newsprint, but many of them appeared to be slicks. Do these ads need to be separated before recycling? Recycler

Dear Recycler,
The ads that are obviously printed on newsprint are recycled with newspapers. The ads that are obviously slicks are recycled with magazines. The big question, however, is which of the colored ads are slicks and which of the colored ads are really high-quality ink on newsprint. The colored print ads on heavy paper are usually slicks. One way to determine if an ad is a slick is to wet one corner of the questionable ad. The newsprint ad will then tear easily, but the slick will not. Try a magazine corner as an example. I discovered this one morning when my

Sunday newspaper was heavily soaked, and the ads were all wet! However, if in doubt, put the ads in with magazines.

Dear Recycle Lady,
I see a lot of aluminum cans thrown in the trash. What is the benefit of recycling these cans? Reader

Dear Reader,
According to livetoplant.com, recycling aluminum cans saves nearly 95% of the energy needed to create one new can from virgin aluminum. That means you can make 20 cans out of recycled material with the same amount of energy it takes to make one can out of new material. In one year alone, energy savings using recycled cans are enough to light a city the size of Pittsburgh for six years, according to current research. Recycling aluminum cans also reduces green-

house gas emissions, saves landfill space, and lowers water pollution.

Interesting Info:
Loggerhead turtles migrate by sensing the Earth's magnetic fields. Researchers exposed young Loggerhead turtles to two specific magnetic fields, one of which held food. Later, when they were exposed to the magnetic field with food, they got really excited and began to dance for joy! According to Researcher Kayla Goforth, "they stick their heads out, flap their flippers wildly, and spin in place."

Have questions about recycling or interesting information about recycling? Send questions or requests to Recyclelady7@gmail.com. Dear Recycle Lady is sponsored jointly by the Greenbrier Recycling Center and Greenworks Recycling.

Secretary of State Kris Warner releases the website link for the public to monitor candidate filings throughout West Virginia

Charleston, W.Va. (Hinton News) - WV Secretary of State Kris Warner is releasing the official website link to the candidate filings for West Virginia's May 12 Primary Election. The link comes from the website hosted by the WV Secretary of State's Office.

All relevant election information, including forms, deadlines, guidance, and the list of candidates, can be found at GoveWV.com.

Secretary Warner also published a "Running for Of-

fice Guide" to help eligible West Virginia citizens to file a Certificate of Announcement to become candidates by midnight on Saturday, Jan. 31.

Depending on the office candidates seek, Certificates of Announcement can be filed with either the WVSOS Office or the County Clerk. The WVSOS Office at the State Capitol, as well as the public guidance

regional offices in Clarksburg and Martinsburg, will be open until midnight on Saturday, Jan. 31, to accommodate late filers.

Secretary Warner is encouraging candidates who want to mail in their Certificate of Announcement not to wait until the last day to mail the Certificate. The United States Postal Service has issued guidance

that indicates that mail dropped off at a post office may not be postmarked on the day the mail was dropped off.

This link: Candidates.wvsos.gov, is the official list of candidates who have filed with the WV Secretary of State, as well as several of those candidates filing at the county level. It is updated throughout each day.

Delnora Reed Acuff to serve as Grand Groundhog Watcher Feb. 2



Delnora Reed Acuff

ATHENS, W.Va. (Hinton News) — With 2026 now in full swing, we all wonder how long winter will linger. On Feb. 2, Concord Charlie — Concord University's longtime weather prognosticator — will issue his prediction.

The projection will arrive during the Groundhog Day Breakfast, at 8 a.m., in the Pais Fellowship Hall at University Point. In addition to the forecast, this year's tradition

will host an appearance by 2026 Grand Groundhog Watcher Delnora Reed Acuff. A Princeton native and Concord University alum, Delnora is an award-winning singer and songwriter known for her heartfelt songs and authentic, story-driven lyrics. She draws on themes like her family, faith, and rural Appalachian roots to create music that is real and timeless.

A 1996 communication arts graduate

of Concord College, Delnora is based just outside of Nashville, where she's racked up titles like "New Artist of the Year," "Inspirational Artist of the Year," "Music Video of the Year," and more, at the Inspirational Country Music Awards. She recently completed the Home for the Holidays tour alongside friend and West Virginia native Landau Eugene Murphy.

The Concord Charlie tradition origi-

nated in 1978 by the late Professor R. T. "Tom" Hill. As chairman of both the geography department and the Appalachian Studies program at Concord, Hill started the Groundhog Day Breakfast to celebrate Appalachian heritage.

Cost per person for breakfast is \$20. Reservations are required by Jan. 28 and may be made online at concord.edu/groundhog or by calling the Office of Advancement at (304) 384-6311.

WVDNR Launches Eastern Newt Citizen Science Survey



Photo provided by WVDNR

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (Hinton News) — The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (WVDNR) today announced the start of a new citizen science project to track the distribution and abundance of eastern newts across the state.

The eastern newt, also known as the red-spotted newt, is a small salamander commonly found in West Virginia's forests, fields and wetlands. It is unique among salamanders because it has three distinct life stages: an aquatic larval stage with external gills, a terrestrial red eft stage that can last several years and an aquatic adult stage. Members of

entomologists expect it to arrive in the future.

"Disease is one of the leading threats to amphibian populations globally," said Kevin Oxenrider, the WVDNR's amphibian and reptile program leader. "That's why it's so important to understand where eastern newts are now and how common they are across West Virginia. Every observation helps us build a clearer picture of their status before this disease arrives."

Outdoor enthusiasts can help prevent the spread of amphibian diseases by washing boots, boats and gear between visits to different outdoor locations, especially aquatic habitats and

allowing gear to fully dry for at least 48 hours before reuse.

The survey will take two years to complete. Members of the public who see the iconic salamander are encouraged to report their sightings to the WVDNR through the Survey123 app or online at WVdnr.gov/eastern-newt-survey.

Avant Garde
HAIR STUDIO

Owners: Chadd Vinson & Harry Peck

Winter Season 10% Discount on All Services!

SHOP LOCAL - HINTON

Bring in a receipt for a 10% discount

Now offering manicure and pedicures

New Stylist on our team: Chanah Ratliff

304-309-5501

212 Temple Street • Hinton, WV 25951

Tuesday-Saturday 9AM-till close



"Mom continued to decline, and I didn't know what to do."

At Greystone they have nurses on duty 24-hours a day, 7-days a week and they'll monitor her health and provide appropriate levels of care for each stage she goes through.

Let us help you.
Call Chauntelle at (304) 860-0233.

The
Villages at
Greystone
Senior Living Community

Beaver (Beckley), WV 25813

www.greystonebeaver.com