

# WVDN AUG 26, 2021

THE WEST VIRGINIA  
**DAILY NEWS**  
MONROE COUNTY, W. VA.      THE JOURNAL OF THE COUNTY      MONROE COUNTY, W. VA.

Recycle Lady      Sports Guide      FOOTBALL PAGES

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**Monroe County Online**  
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# Letter To The Editor: Fact Checking

By matthew young | WVDN AUG 26, 2021

Dear Editor,

I read your Editor's Note caveat prior to printing the statement full of disinformation from one of our esteemed members of the WV House of Delegates. Your note mentions impartiality in political matters and a denial of an endorsement of, or for, any candidate. This does not absolve the newspaper of fact checking the content of a statement.

The diatribe is full of information that is clearly incorrect and easily fact checked. A few quick examples: 1. Contrary to the statement, masks ARE highly effective in preventing spread of viruses, including Covid - 19 (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/science/science-briefs/masking-science-sars-cov2.html>). 2. The opposite of the statement is true about masks causing hypercapnia - THEY DO NOT (<https://healthfeedback.org/claimreview/wearing-face-masks-does-not-cause-hypercapnia-or-affect-the-immune-system/>). 3. The United States Covid - 19 infection/fatality ratio is over 1.0% - 36,951,181 cases and 620,493 deaths. The world wide Covid - 19 infection/fatality ratio is 2.1% - 208,470,375 cases and 4,377,979 deaths (1.7%) (World Health Organization Covid- 19 Dashboard). 4. The death rate from influenza (the flu) is typically well below 0.1% (World Health Organization 2019). A conservative estimate by the CDC is that the Covid - 19 virus fatality rate is at least 3.5 to 5 times that of the flu. The writer also seems to think that the fact that ONLY 400 children under 15 have died from Covid - 19 is acceptable. The writer's self appointed 15% fatality rate being the red line would equate to 5.5 million deaths of Americans to date. Thank goodness those in charge don't have the same idiotic opinion. The statement goes on with more misinformation but the point is made.

The political use of dis- and/or mis-information has risen to new heights in recent years. Individuals that want to push their own misguided agendas have thrived on the phenomenon. There is not a realistic chance of the writer realizing the errors and harm of the propaganda but we expect better from our journalistic publications. Printing of this kind of misinformation can prove very harmful if not deadly to our residents; in opposition to your stated mission in every publication.

Sincerely,

- Dr. Roger A. Holliday

## Dear Abby: Thursday, August 26

By WV Daily News | WVDN AUG 26, 2021

### Woman Plants Thick Roots In Married Son's Home

**DEAR ABBY:** Ten years ago, my friend "Maureen" suffered a breakup that emotionally and financially devastated her and moved in with her son and his young family. Since then, she has recovered in both areas. Maureen inserts herself into every aspect of their lives — vacations, entertaining, etc. When they go out to eat, she always joins them. Her daughter-in-law, "Eve," has routinely given her hints that it's time to move on.

Maureen then goes to her son and tells him what Eve said, and it causes problems in their marriage. After dinner each night, Eve goes into her room, closes the door and stays there. Maureen is capable of living on her own, but she said she might get lonely and that's why she won't leave. The grandkids are pretty much grown now, and there's no need for Maureen to stay. Her friends have been encouraging her to make a life of her own. Eve and her husband plan to move out of state in 10 years, and Maureen plans on moving with them. I think she is putting her son's marriage at risk for her own selfish reason. Maureen isn't old and infirm. She could possibly meet a nice gentleman if she moved out. All her friends have suggested this. What are your thoughts? — BYSTANDER IN FLORIDA

**DEAR BYSTANDER:** If Maureen were unwell or destitute, the situation would be different. She is neither. My thoughts are that until Eve is angry enough to assert herself and tell her husband the current living conditions are intolerable, nothing will change.

**DEAR ABBY:** I recently had to say goodbye to my precious dog, Wendy Darling. She was a sweet old girl with bad kidneys and severe joint pain. During the last few weeks of her life, she could barely eat, and not at all in the last days. I know in my head that ending her suffering was the right thing to do. I have supported friends and family who helped their pets this way. It's my heart that is having trouble. I keep thinking that I didn't have the right to make that decision; that life is too precious to deliberately steal even a single day. While her body was declining, her mind and spirit danced, and she looked at me with complete trust. I miss her so much and find myself crying throughout the day. Can you tell me how to reconcile my head and my heart? I have this huge weight on my chest and more than a little bit of guilt. — MISSING WENDY IN OREGON

**DEAR MISSING WENDY:** Please accept my sympathy for the loss of your precious canine companion. You gave Wendy Darling a wonderful life, filled with love. Dogs were meant to run and play, to love and be loved, not to suffer. I am sure you miss her, but please stop beating yourself up for making a rational decision about what was best for her. If your grief continues to overwhelm you, talk with your veterinarian about joining a grief support group. I am sure he or she will reassure you. Your loss is recent. That you are emotional is understandable. Try to remember that tears are healing.

*Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at [www.DearAbby.com](http://www.DearAbby.com) or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.*

## Dear Recycle Lady: Thursday, August 26

By Recycle Lady | WVDN AUG 26, 2021

**Dear Recycle Lady,**

I have an aerosol can with a non-removable large plastic top containing the nozzle. Will this aerosol can recycle? Hope It Recycles

**Dear Hope It Recycles,**

Yes, it can be recycled with steel cans. Before recycling your can, spray until nothing more comes out or you do not hear any product inside when you shake it. According to [earth911.com](http://earth911.com), aerosol cans used to contain chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) that were thought to deplete the ozone layer, but those chemicals were phased out in 1978.

## **Dear Recycle Lady,**

Are there companies that are making products out of recycled ocean plastic? If so, what are some of these products? Hard to Believe

## **Dear Hard to Believe,**

Every minute a dump truck of plastic waste enters our oceans, says Erin Simon, head of Plastic Waste and Business at World Wildlife Fund (WWF). "From sea turtles to whales, plastic pollution is wreaking havoc on ocean life through ingestion, entanglement, and habitat loss due to pollution." Thankfully, there are companies today that are committed to using these recycled ocean materials to make new products. A few of those dedicated companies are Adidas's Parley running shoes, Solgaard's Shore-Tex backpacks and fanny packs, Sea Bags' toiletry bags made from sailboat sailcloth, Leonisa Love's swimsuits, Norton Poing unisex sunglasses, Humanscale's high-performance smart chairs, Hanover's 2 laptop backpacks, Ocean Sole & Sea Star's beachwear, Kevin Murphy's Ocean Plastic Packaging and the Marine Debris Bakelite Project, a collection of 11 Bakelite look-alike products. Also, there is evening wear, yarn, green toys, and surf boards that are being made from recycled ocean plastics. These are great products, but they can be made of other materials, if no plastic was available. Best of all, properly recycle or dispose of used products and never dump in the waterways.

## **Dear Readers,**

When researching the above question, I found website, <https://earthbuddies.net/5-plastics>. It lists the top five plastic wastes that litter our ocean. Not surprisingly, single-use plastic bags top the list. They look so much like a jelly fish that marine life mistakenly think they are food and many die from eating them. Other marine life gets entangled in the handles. Plastic bottles are second and account for approximately 11% of global plastic waste. One word of caution - avoid reusing plastic bottles as some types of plastic becomes toxic. Food containers and cutlery are third, particularly takeaway and delivery food containers whose use increased exponentially during the coronavirus pandemic. Use of the fourth plastic waste product, plastic wrapping, has also increased during the pandemic. Plastic wrappings account for approximately 9% of global plastic waste. The fifth product is fishing equipment, particularly the synthetic rope from which fishing nets are made. Additionally, two dishonorable mentions were listed. First dishonorable mention is cigarette butts because they can break down into microplastics. Plus, they contain chemicals that are harmful to every single organisms swallowing them. There is then a chance that the fish that ate these toxic chemicals are caught by fishermen and sold to markets to be consumed by humans. "Throwing cigarette butts into our waterways is like poisoning ourselves," says the article. Diapers and wet wipes were the second dishonorable mention since they contain human waste and other rubbish. Diapers and wet wipes should all be put in the trash, never in the waterways.

**Good News:** Kudos to Evian that has announced that they plan to make all their plastic bottles from 100 percent recycled plastic by 2025.

***Have questions about recycling, or interesting information about recycling? Send questions or requests to [recyclelady@greenbrier-swa.com](mailto:recyclelady@greenbrier-swa.com) . Dear Recycle Lady is sponsored jointly by the Greenbrier Recycling Center and Greenworks Recycling.***

# **PSC Adds Suddenlink Public Comment Hearing In Princeton**

By autumn shelton | WVDN AUG 26, 2021

Following public outcry that Mercer County residents would need to drive almost an hour to Beckley to discuss customer service provided by Suddenlink, the Public Service Commission of West Virginia (PSC) has decided to hold a public comment hearing in Princeton.

Originally the PSC had scheduled public hearings for only Beckley and Charleston.

The Princeton public comment hearing will take place on Tuesday, September 14, at 5 p.m. in the City of Princeton Parks and Recreation Meeting Room located at 201 Morrison Drive in Princeton.

“The commission has received thousands of complaints from Suddenlink customers about the unacceptable level of service provided by the company,” said PSC Chair Charlotte Lane. “Listening to citizens’ input is a critical part of how the commission decides cases. We provide several ways for customers to comment on the cases in front of us and actively encourage customers to be part of the process.”

In May, PSC officials met with Suddenlink representatives to discuss a correction plan to improve customer service after receiving just over 1,900 complaints. After 30 days, Suddenlink sent Lane a letter “that contained neither a correction plan nor details of the steps that Suddenlink has taken to improve cable television service.”

Now, the commission had ordered Suddenlink to provide a detailed plan on steps toward improvement. As part of the plan, the PSC will be hearing from West Virginians.

Intervenors in the case include the Commission’s Consumer Advocate Division; the Cities of Beckley, Charleston and Elkins; and the Kanawha County Commission.

After the public comment hearings, the PSC will hold an evidentiary hearing in Charleston on Aug. 26.

## **Local Suddenlink Customers Speak Their Minds About Poor Service Provided By The Company At Beckley PSC Hearing**

By autumn shelton | WVDN AUG 26, 2021



Suddenlink representatives sat stone-faced during the West Virginia Public Service Commission's hearing in Beckley as they listened to dozens of customers tell them just how bad their cable service has become.

On Monday evening, in a hearing that lasted over two hours, more than 25 people spoke about unfair billing practices, the lack of quality customer service, the need for competition and much more in regards to the cable, internet and phone provider Suddenlink, a company that provides services to more than 300,000 households and small businesses and has over 133,000 cable television customers in West Virginia.

The hearing, which was called after Suddenlink failed to provide the Public Service Commission (PSC) with a correction plan detailing how they were going to improve services in June, was led by PSC Chair Charlotte Lane.

"We have received about 2,000 customer complaints about Suddenlink since 2019," Lane stated as she began the hearing. She said the goal of the PSC is to "facilitate an improvement in service." Part of the improvement plan is listening to concerns from local customers who are becoming increasingly frustrated by the company.

The first customer to speak before the PSC was Kevin Williams.

"To begin with, cable services go in and out," Williams stated. "That is a problem." He continued that the PSC should look at other options for a cable service provider for West Virginia.

"I think we need to maybe look at bidding for other cable companies to come in," he said. "Right now there is a monopoly. There is no one else to compete with Suddenlink, so pretty much they can do whatever they want to do and we are left to foot the bill."

Another speaker, Jeff Simpson, said “You know, 10-12 years ago Suddenlink was a great company . . . and then we started hearing this name Altice. Since Altice has gotten involved, things have gotten horrendous whenever you try to call in.” He stated that the old call center, once located in Parkersburg, provided excellent customer service but now that they are gone customer service has plummeted.

Phyllis Bostic added that she didn’t understand the reason for all of the additional fees included in her bill.

“We have all these fees and our fees are \$30-\$40 a month on this bill. What are all these fees?” she asked. “I don’t work for you, so I don’t know why I am paying a franchise fee. On top of that is the sports fee . . . why are we paying an extra sports fee?”

Bostic said her bill continues to increase, but when she calls about the increases, she is told she is no longer part of a monthly promotion.

“I didn’t even know I was even on a three year promotion that expired,” Bostic said. “I don’t know why we have to keep paying all these extra fees.”

Dean Farris, a resident of Arnett, said that his bill “goes up and down” and he has been out of phone, cable and internet for two weeks. Suddenlink sent a sub-contractor to his house to fix the problem, Farris noted, but the contractor didn’t fix anything.

Not only did residents come out to the hearing, but local officials decided to lend their voice to help with customer issues.

Beckley’s Information Technology Director, William Kelly, spoke before the PSC as a representative for the city.

“The city of Beckley is a customer of Suddenlink,” Kelly said. “We suffer from the same issues — whether it’s inconsistent TV service or whether it’s an inability to actually contact someone who can give you help with a cable problem.”

He said that the city receives numerous complaints from residents about Suddenlink, including those from people who don’t understand fees and get upset with billing.

“I will say from the city’s perspective as a franchise authority, it is very frustrating for us that we don’t have more control, more say so, more ability to actually address these people’s complaints.”

He concluded by stating that Suddenlink once had local representatives who could help, but Altice has pushed most of those people out. “I certainly believe there is something Suddenlink could do about this, if they really wanted to,” Kelly concluded.

Delegate Mick Bates (R-Raleigh) told commissioners that he has “personally fielded hundreds of complaints” from those upset with Suddenlink. The complaints basically fall into three categories: lack of customer service, poor service and billing issues.

“You will hear from Suddenlink that all this is because of Covid,” Bates said. “Quite frankly, I’m tired of Covid being the excuse for everything we can’t get right. These problems existed before Covid, they existed during Covid, and, if there is ever such a day, they will exist after Covid unless we make this company accountable for what it is doing and what it is not doing.”

“Access to the outside world is essential in this modern world and while it may not be regulated as a utility, it is as essential as electricity, sewer, water and gas,” Bates said. “Suddenlink essentially operates as a



monopoly in many areas of our state and because of this, they can charge whatever they want, however they want, whenever they want.”

“We are gonna fix this problem,” Bates said of himself and those in the state legislature.

Delegate Brandon Steele (R-Raleigh) added that in the past legislative session he read a bill, which passed through his committee on a non-partisan basis, that would have given the PSC power to regulate Suddenlink.

“Not one person from Altice or Suddenlink ever came to my office to talk about that bill. No lobbyist ever stopped by and I’ll tell you why — because they knew that we couldn’t do anything about it,” Steele said. “When I got done with that bill, and we were getting ready to communicate the committee report, we were all notified that this was regulated by the FCC and we didn’t have the power to do it anyway.” He noted that “we are up against a giant” regarding the Federal Communications Commission.

Steele said that the state is going to need to work with the federal government, including Sen. Joe Manchin, Sen. Shelley Moore Capito and Rep. Carol Miller, to stop the residents of West Virginia from getting “ripped off.”

“The people that are coming out and fixing this stuff, time and time again we hear that it’s subcontractors,” Steele noted of the local Suddenlink workforce. “They are not employing people in our state. They are not here creating jobs . . . The billing practices, the transparency, the service, the customer service, the use of contractors — they are not being a friend to this state.”

As each person went to the podium to speak, those in the audience cheered, clapped and shouted “Amen,” as they shared their personal stories of poor customer service and found that they were not alone.

The PSC is hosting three additional in-person public comment hearings, including one in Princeton on Tuesday, Sept. 14.

For those who are unable to attend the hearings, but still want their voices heard, they may send a letter to the commission at 201 Brooks Street, Charleston, WV 25301 or they can submit a comment on the commission’s website [www.psc.state.wv.us](http://www.psc.state.wv.us).

Suddenlink representatives at the Beckley hearing included Jim Campbell, VP of Government Affairs; Bob Lillie, VP Local Market Engagement; Bethany Simmons, manager of Local Market Engagement and Charleston based attorney David Hanna representing Suddenlink.

When asked for comment on the hearing, Suddenlink Director of Communications Ashwin Bhandari sent the following statement to the West Virginia Daily News via email:

“Suddenlink is proud to serve our West Virginia communities. We take very seriously our commitment to providing quality connectivity and reliable service, and to ensuring our customers have positive experiences when they engage with us.

We recognize that some customers have had challenges with our services or experienced frustration. We appreciate the time customers took to share those experiences with us, and we will follow up with each of them to address their concerns.

The company continues to invest in advanced infrastructure to ensure our customers receive reliable broadband, video, and phone service, including upgrading portions of our network to increase capacity and addressing pockets of network congestion, and we continue to see improvements in our service quality. We have 1 Gig internet available to more than 90% of households we serve in West Virginia, and we continue to

launch new innovative services for customers such as Optimum Mobile and Stream to give them more connectivity and entertainment choices.

Our teams are working diligently to continuously enhance the service experience for our West Virginia customers, and we are committed to communicating with the PSC and other public officials about our ongoing investments and service improvements.”

Following the conclusion of the hearings, the PSC will hold a main evidentiary hearing on Oct. 6.

## Spartan Coach Sees Big Potential In 2021

By by brandon baker | WVDN AUG 26, 2021



Greenbrier East Spartan head coach Ray Lee is a man of faith and positivity. His players love to play for him and his tenure leading the football team at the school has been nothing short of spectacular. That does not look to change as Lee is extremely confident in his 2021 Spartans and delivered a message to the fans last week.

Lee had tremendous respect for his team last year after all the adversity they faced. The Spartans season ended on a cancellation after they had prepared to play Lincoln County.

“Last season was very tough with basically having a floating football schedule. We didn’t know who we were playing from week to week. Our kids did an excellent job of adjusting to the schedule and overcoming any adversity in their way. It was tough how the season ended, with our last game getting canceled at the last minute, but we were happy with their play with all that was going on,” Lee said.

With several key players gone from last season, Lee still sees the situation as one to learn from and grow moving forward.

“This team has some big shoes to fill. We have been in the mix in the postseason each of the last three seasons and look to continue with this team being in the top 16 once again when the regular season ends in November. This year’s team has some tremendous talent and as a coaching staff we look forward to putting things in place that makes these players successful,” he said.

The Spartans off-season workout program has been a constant over the last several years and once again the players returning for this year bought in from the beginning.

“This team did a good job of putting in the work during the off-season and have since carried that over into our fall camp. Our schedule is a good schedule with some very competitive games on there, and we feel this team can be very successful if they put their mind to it,” Lee said.

Lee truly loves coaching and loves the community support his team gets. He, along with everyone else, hopes for a year of normalcy and good football.

“As always, we appreciate the support we get from the community and hopefully some sort of normalcy sets back in where we can fill the stands again with community members coming out and watching our team. This season we look to have both reserve seating as well as general admission in hopes of filling Spartan Stadium,” Lee concluded.

## **Rental Assistance Available, Eviction Moratorium Extended**

By by bobby bordelon | WVDN AUG 26, 2021

The West Virginia Mountaineer Rental Assistance program is now sending money to landlords on behalf of tenants unable to pay during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The federal program was created by Congress and approved by former President Donald Trump in the December 2020 COVID-19 relief bill, supplying \$25 billion for the country and \$200 million for West Virginia.

Ronceverte Recorder Leah Smith works with Legal Aid of West Virginia. In this role, Smith assists residents who need help with the Mountaineer Rental Assistance program.

“It’s pretty wide open – it isn’t available for everyone but if you fall into a certain low income, which most West Virginians are going to,” said Smith. “If you know someone in Ronceverte or [Greenbrier County] as a whole that might be helped by this ... they just go to the West Virginia Housing and Development Fund. That’s the agency that had been administering this money from the federal government, we’re just trying to get the word out that the moratorium ended effectively two days ago, so people are going to start losing and

becoming homeless as a result.”

According to the website, eligible expenses may include:

- Past due and current rent beginning April 1, 2020 and up to three months forward rent.
- Past due and current water, sewer, gas, electric and home energy costs such as propane.
- A one-time \$300 stipend for internet expenses so you can use the internet for distance learning, telework, telemedicine and/or to obtain government services.
- “There is no cap on the amount of assistance provided, however, households are only eligible for 12 months of assistance unless it is determined additional assistance is needed for housing stability. In no instance will assistance be provided for more than 15 months.”

The program’s website also notes that “not all renters are eligible for assistance. In general, the program is designed to assist West Virginia residential renters with annual income of no more than 80 percent of area median income and:”

- “One or more household members has qualified for unemployment benefits, experienced a reduction in household income, incurred significant costs, or experienced other financial hardship due directly or indirectly to the coronavirus outbreak.”
- “One or more household members are at risk of homelessness or housing instability such as a past due utility or rent notice or an eviction notice.”
- When applying, several documents will be needed, such as a current lease or certification of landlord/tenant relationship, a proof of identification for the head of household, proof of residency, the most recent utility bill for utility assistance, and proof of income.

“If you know anybody that’s hurting and hasn’t been able to pay rent, please apply,” said Smith. “It is unprecedented. We’re not likely to see another amount of money like this available. It’s to pay 15 months of rent. ... The other really cool things about the program is that it’s available for not only tenants who are unable to pay rent but landlords. They’re hurting too cause they haven’t been able to get rent. ... Landlords won’t be able to get it if they kick people out, so they need to keep people in. ... There’s also money for utility assistance for people that haven’t been able to pay during COVID. There’s money for that too.”

A moratorium on evictions based on inability to pay rent was approved as part of the CARES Act in March of 2020. This did not include evictions filed before the moratorium or where the eviction is based on other reasons besides nonpayment of rent. This is a huge reason the rental assistance funds were made available.

“There’s been a moratorium on evictions in the whole country since the beginning of the pandemic to prevent the spread of coronavirus,” Smith said. “The government, in recognition of so many people that are out there hurting, either directly or indirectly have a reduction of income because of COVID, has allotted an unprecedented amount of money, billions of dollars, for the country and millions in West Virginia, to assist people who haven’t been able to pay rent.”

The original moratorium was set to expire last week, but Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky signed a new order instating another moratorium until October 3, 2021.

“The emergence of the delta variant has led to a rapid acceleration of community transmission in the United States, putting more Americans at increased risk, especially if they are unvaccinated,” said Walensky in a CDC

press release. "This moratorium is the right thing to do to keep people in their homes and out of congregate settings where COVID-19 spreads. It is imperative that public health authorities act quickly to mitigate such an increase of evictions, which could increase the likelihood of new spikes in SARS-CoV-2 transmission. Such mass evictions and the attendant public health consequences would be very difficult to reverse."

Recently, the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources reported that there are approximately 3,400 cases of COVID-19 throughout the state, including the Delta variant.

"We're starting to see a more rapid increase," said Governor Jim Justice during his Friday, August 6, press briefing. "There needs to be more and more concern about getting yourself vaccinated because we're running out of time. ... It will only get worse if we don't really aggressively run and get vaccinated today."

To apply for the program, go to [wvhdf.com](http://wvhdf.com) and click the orange link on the top of the page that reads "real help for West Virginia renters and landlords is here." The site also notes calling 211 can provide assistance. The website also offers a place to insert an address to have a physical application mailed.

## Rupert Public Library To Hold Art Show

By WV Daily News | WVDN AUG 26, 2021

The Rupert Public Library will be holding its fifth Art Show, Sept. 24 and 25. There will be a reception on Saturday the 25th from 5 p.m. - 7 p.m.

"Hidden Mountain Treasures" music group will perform for your entertainment while you view the art entries and enjoy food prepared by the Board of trustees and staff.

All artists working in oil, acrylic, pastel, watercolor, mixed media, and drawing are invited to submit up to three items to be displayed and judged. First, second and third place ribbons, and Best of Show will be awarded. There will be monetary awards for the blue ribbon winner in each category, Best of Show winner and the People's Choice.

If you wish to show your work you can pick up an entry form at the library or call 304-392-6158 to have a form mailed to you. You may bring your work to be entered Friday, Sept. 24 between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. Artists can bring in entries on an earlier date if they cannot come before 4 p.m. Friday. All entries are to be framed with a wire hanger. Please no alligator or zigzag hangers. Bring your entry and release of liability form. There will be a \$5 fee for each art entry.

The library staff and board of trustees invite you to enjoy the festivities.

## Lewisburg To Host 'First Fridays After Five' Sept. 3

By WV Daily News | WVDN AUG 26, 2021

September First Fridays in Lewisburg is on September 3rd from 5pm to 8pm! Join the fun ... complimentary tastings, live music, festive beverages and special offers throughout town .... all free to the public. Everyone is welcome!

Dance to the tunes of Dark Matters, a 9-piece soul band rooted in the sounds of 60's soul, deep grooves, heavy soul and hefty horn lines. Live performance will be held in the City Green Space from 5pm to 8pm!

The Greenbrier Valley Visitors Center welcomes September with an evening of eclectic art and music. The Art in the Valley series presents a gallery exhibit by local artists Tenley Shewmake and Bob Hoffa. This creative duo's show titled "From Cotton to Copper: A Continuum of Elegance" features a "marriage of proportion, balance and function in materials from soft flexible Cotton to cold rigid Copper." The Art Alcove highlights the unique artwork of well-known local artist, writer, and vocalist, Susanna Robinson. Susanna's show "All These Ladies, Quite Bewitching" includes a bevy of collage portraits reflecting a true Art Nouveau influence. Stop in to meet all of the artists and learn about their creative process. Live music throughout the evening will be provided by G.R.O.U.P. (Greenbrier River Optimistic Ukulele Players) and George, Jim and Bob, better known as The Rust Brothers. Don't miss this art-filled, fun evening in downtown Lewisburg! 905 Washington Street West, 645-1000.

Stop by the Sheena Pendley Photography Studio to check out their selection of photographic prints and postcards featuring some of WV's iconic locations! Postcard bundles start at just \$15! There is something for everyone to enjoy. 846 South Court Street, 304-646-9452.

Author Kris Hall will be sharing his newest novel The Fabian Waltz at A New Chapter, which is based in the life of George Bernard Shaw. 922 Washington Street West, 681-318-3501.

Performing at The Asylum: Victor Della Torre or Vic D.T. as he is also known, is a drummer singer of four decades. Able to play any genre of music, he mixes his Roland electronic drums to blend with tracks sans drums and vocals, and plays and sings in an effortless and very entertaining way. Young and old, classic rockers to country fans, all get a taste of what they like to hear. 399 Randolph Street East, 681-318-3515.

Pop in to Patina to enjoy live Celtic music by Patrick O'Flaherty and complimentary beverages & Girl Scout cookies. 1046 Washington Street East, 304-520-4960.

First Fridays is sponsored by City National Bank and the Shops & Restaurants of Downtown Lewisburg. For more information go to [visitlewisburgwv.com](http://visitlewisburgwv.com) or to FaceBook or call 304-645-4333.

## **WVSOM Students Trained In Use Of Narcan**

By WV Daily News | WVDN AUG 26, 2021



In a state noted to be among those most affected by the opioid epidemic, one medical school in West Virginia is taking a bold step in working to prevent drug overdose deaths.

As part of the White Coat Ceremony that marks the start of first-year students' medical school journeys, all 214 members of the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine's (WVSOM) Class of 2025 will receive the medication Narcan to carry with them in case they encounter an overdose victim in a nonmedical setting. Narcan is a brand of naloxone, a drug that can block the effects of opioids and potentially prevent the death of someone who is experiencing an overdose.

On Aug. 23, first-year students gathered in the Conference Center in the WVSOM Student Center to be trained in administering Narcan, which is required before an individual can receive the life-saving medication. Barbara Holt, education coordinator for WVSOM's Center for Rural and Community Health, led a presentation that illustrated how to recognize an opioid overdose, know when Narcan is appropriate and understand the responsibilities that come with administering the medication.

Holt said WVSOM is the only medical school in West Virginia to provide naloxone to incoming students during a White Coat Ceremony. She explained that while anyone can be trained to administer naloxone, educating medical students about its use can help reduce the stigma associated with the medication, which is an important part of addressing the epidemic from a public health perspective.

"I'm pleased that the students agreed to do this," Holt said. "Education helps people understand that the opioid crisis is a chronic disease issue and that people with opioid use disorder have a problem with their opioid receptor due to the brain's reaction to opioid use. You have to save a life so that person can live long enough to get into recovery, and Narcan can help do that."

Narcan is available in three forms, and students were shown how to administer each. First-year students will receive a box containing two doses of Narcan in the form of a nasal spray, to be delivered through a single nostril.

Narcan and other naloxone medications can help a person stay alive long enough to be transported to the hospital for further help. Therefore, Holt told students, a person administering naloxone must call emergency services after a dose is given.

In West Virginia, a person who delivers an opioid antagonist in good faith to someone they believe to be experiencing an overdose is protected from criminal and civil liability provided that emergency services are called and that no gross negligence takes place, Holt said.

Linda Boyd, D.O., WVSOM's vice president for academic affairs and dean, said the Narcan training and distribution are tangible examples of WVSOM's mission to serve the health needs of West Virginians.

"As the largest state medical school, it is our responsibility to equip students to be able to intervene if they see someone unconscious to potentially save a life if that is due to an opioid overdose," Boyd said. "If more people get trained to use and carry naloxone, it can make an important public health difference in West Virginia. WVSOM students can be an important part of the solution."

According to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, West Virginia's drug overdose death rate was more than 2.6 times the national average in 2016. That year, there were about 52 overdose deaths per 100,000 people in the state.

The West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources released preliminary data earlier this year indicating that 1,275 overdose deaths had been reported so far for the year 2020.

## Monroe County Online Services Takes It To The Head Of The Pack

By Theresa Flerx | WVDN AUG 26, 2021



The pandemic made it hard for everyone to conduct business as usual, but last year's shutdown gave Monroe County Clerk Donnie Evans, Chief Deputy Jeremy Meadows and staff quiet time in the office to think about the



document transactions that don't need to be handled face-to-face. They then got to work tailoring an internet-based system to make that happen.

Utilizing his degree in computer science, Meadows began making the county website more user-friendly, convenient and informative. The site [monroecounty.gov](http://monroecounty.gov) provides a way to sign up to receive texts of real-time alerts, up-to-date news, upcoming events and to track important dates.

Meadows also created a handy app to provide just about everything a county resident needs to stay informed. The most recent project undertaken by the clerk's office was to utilize a \$5,000 grant from the West Virginia Records Management and Preservation Board and a \$5,000 match from the Monroe County Commission to scan and index deeds dating back to the 1920s.

"This means researchers can view and print these documents back to the 1920s without having to handle the original books and pages," Evans explained. "This will help preserve the original deed."

Another \$5,000 grant was approved by the Records Management and Preservation Board for the 2021-2022 fiscal year.

Scanning and indexing documents offered two things, Evans said "It provided a digital book of the recorded document that we didn't have before," and people now have the ability to look up preserved documents online.

Meadows reiterated that deeds dating back to the 1920s have been scanned as well as indexed, and explained that deeds from 1799 have been scanned.

Power of attorneys and other documents as early as the 1950s have been scanned while deeds of trust, releases, assignments, fiduciaries, etc. recorded up until July 1, 1999, are available online. Steps needed to search for scanned and indexed documents can be found on the Monroe County website. A visit to the record room will still need to happen in order to access the hardback indexes of documents prior to July 1, 1999.

Although the Monroe County Courthouse is currently open to serve the community, saving a trip to the courthouse is an added convenience for many with work hours that prevent them from making it to Union before closing time.

"A person now has the ability to look up online and print any document [currently available on the website]," Evans said. "We have seen a decrease in the record room and think that is a result of COVID, and it does save people a trip" to the courthouse.

The clerk's office staff tackled the task of virtual documentation; the Records Management and Preservation funding is used toward labor and overtime necessary to scan and index documents.

Joe Geiger, director of the West Virginia Archives and History, has also been valuable in completing the project.

"Joe Geiger has been a tremendous help," Evans said. "He's been super good to us."

Already boasting a website that provided the most up-to-date election information unmatched by surrounding counties, Meadows "brought the county to the head of the pack," with the scanning project, app and other features offered through the website. Other county clerk's offices have reached out to Meadows and Evans for advice on how to set up similar sites.

Evans explained "The biggest thing about the new website is that Jeremy can go into it and change information, especially with COVID updates" versus the former company that maintained the website.

Monroe is also the first county to offer the ability to create a picture voter identification card.

Meadows said future legislation may be set to require a photo voter ID card "down the road, we thought we would get ahead of that."

Another way the clerk's office got ahead of the game was when "Jeremy came up with a budget and payroll system that went live on [a] Thursday," Evans said.

Later that same day, a letter was received from the previous service provider stating it was going out of business.

Considering the trouble in receiving adequate customer support, "We saw the writing on the wall," Evans said. Meadows' system also saves the county money, the clerk noted.

Some of the services offered on the newly improved [monroecounty.gov](http://monroecounty.gov) are downloadable PDFs to request birth certificates, death certificates, election and candidate forms, and others. Many of these forms can be

completed on a computer before printing. Probate-related documents are available on the site with information explaining the process and a link to make an appointment.

Requests can be made to have a matter put on the agenda for an upcoming county commission meeting. Minutes of past county commission meetings are also posted online.

Important county governmental meeting dates, times and locations can be found on the site.

Attorneys can e-file court documents, have them reviewed by an outside vendor, pay associated fees and submitted to the courthouse electronically without having to leave their offices.

Details on various departments that keep the county operational are available on the site, as are emergency alerts.

The history of Monroe County is told on the website along with photos of historic locations, scenic views and community festivals. Nearly everything a MOCO resident or visitor needs to know can be found at [monroecounty.gov](http://monroecounty.gov).

In an effort to provide more “transparency, we worked really hard to get where we are,” Evans said.

During the beginning of the pandemic, Evans visited the homes of some Monroe County residents in need of courthouse services, much like an old time “country doctor.”

And not ready to rest on their laurels, the staff of the clerk’s office haven’t finished finding ways to support the community.

Over the course of a year, “Donnie has really thought about how best to serve the public,” Meadows said.

In 2020 and into 2021, “We learned how much we could do,” Evans noted.

## **Morrisey Sues Biden Administration Over Fentanyl Trafficking's**

By WV Daily News | WVDN AUG 26, 2021

West Virginia Attorney General Patrick Morrisey filed a lawsuit Thursday against the Biden administration over its refusal to stop deadly fentanyl from flowing across the nation’s southern border.

The Attorney General’s action against Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas asks the court to force the agency to reconsider its termination of a Trump-era policy, known as Remain in Mexico. The complaint alleges the secretary recently canceled the policy without due consideration for the impact on efforts to stop the smuggling of illegal drugs such as fentanyl.

“Ending the Remain in Mexico policy will undoubtedly lead to an increase in illegal drug trafficking and thus senseless deaths from fentanyl,” Attorney General Morrisey said. “I’ve long believed that a lawsuit should not be necessary to force the government to secure our southern border. We spoke out two months ago, yet the administration has failed to respond to our concerns. The border is more porous than ever. In the face of such silence and inaction, and because so many lives are at stake, litigation is the only remedy left to West Virginia.”

The lawsuit explains fentanyl is about 100 times more potent than morphine. A lethal dose can be as small as two milligrams. That means one kilogram of fentanyl (equivalent to 2.2 pounds) contains up to 500,000 potentially lethal doses.

The Attorney General alleges that ending the Remain in Mexico policy has exacerbated the fentanyl problem by dramatically increasing the drug’s supply by reassigning border security personnel and other resources the

policy had freed up to stop smuggling and unlawful crossings.

The lawsuit asks the court to find that cancellation of the Remain in Mexico program was rash and ill considered.

The Attorney General's lawsuit was filed in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of West Virginia. Read a copy at <https://bit.ly/3sxxg3s2>.

Read his June 7 letter to Secretary Mayorkas at <https://bit.ly/3cqzig9>.

## **Capito, Manchin Announce Funding For Alzheimer's Research**

By WV Daily News | WVDN AUG 26, 2021

U.S. Senators Shelley Moore Capito (R-W.Va.) and Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.), members of the Senate Appropriations Committee, today announced \$507,613 in funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) for clinical research related to neurological disorders at West Virginia University (WVU). Specifically, this funding will examine psychosocial stress-induced vascular contributions to cognitive impairment and Alzheimer's disease.

"Alzheimer's disease is a deeply personal issue to me, and I know firsthand the strain it has on individuals and their loved ones. That's why I have worked to robustly fund research into Alzheimer's disease and Dementia and worked hard to advocate for the resources our medical institutions need to pursue a cure. I'm encouraged by this project announcement today, which will support research efforts at WVU," Senator Capito said.

"Alzheimer's is a heartbreaking disease that affects more than 39,000 West Virginians. It is incredibly important to invest in research to help us learn more about the causes of Alzheimer's and to find a cure for this horrible disease. That is why I'm pleased HHS is investing in Alzheimer's research at West Virginia University, and I look forward to seeing the impacts for West Virginians who live with Alzheimer's and their families, friends and loved ones. We must continue to work together to find a cure, and I am committed to these efforts," Senator Manchin said.

## **'Opioid Abuse Prevention Game of the Week' Initiative Kicks Off**

By WV Daily News | WVDN AUG 26, 2021

West Virginia Attorney General Patrick Morrisey announced his office will kick off its "Opioid Abuse Prevention Game of the Week" initiative for a fifth year.

The statewide awareness effort has yielded immense success since its inception, engaging with teams and

communities at more than 210 high school football games across West Virginia.

“Prevention remains key in tackling the devastation wrought by opioid abuse once and for all,” Morrisey said. “Each week this initiative provides yet another opportunity to present life-saving information to communities across West Virginia. Without education, addiction can begin with treatment for the most routine of injuries, so it is crucial that we inform everyone – young and old – about the risks of prescription opioids in hopes that added awareness can make the difference in stopping senseless death.”

The 2021 season kicks off with games featuring Logan vs. Man and Tyler Consolidated vs. Ritchie County.

The initiative is part of a broader partnership to tackle opioid use in high school athletics between the Attorney General’s Office and the West Virginia Secondary School Activities Commission.

“This is an important collaboration between Attorney General Morrisey’s office and the WVSSAC because opioid abuse and addiction continue to be prevalent in our communities,” said Bernie Dolan, executive director of the WVSSAC. “Bringing awareness to the problem is critical if we’re going to stop the destruction of lives stemming from opioid abuse, and the Game of the Week program is an excellent way to accomplish this.”

Throughout each week, the initiative engages with student-athletes, coaches, school officials and communities across West Virginia. Representatives from the Attorney General’s Office inform the respective coaches as to the dangers of opioid use and provide educational material for display and distribution in the schools to foster more discussion of the issue.

The week culminates with the Attorney General’s Office staffing an information booth at each of the select sporting events to distribute opioid abuse awareness materials.

Opioid painkillers may temporarily relieve pain, but do nothing to address the underlying injury and can have serious side effects. The medication also carries striking similarities to heroin.

The attorney general and his partners worry the unnecessary usage of opioid painkillers to treat athletic injuries could lead to increased dependence, abuse and addiction.

Parents and caregivers are urged to discuss alternative treatment plans with their child’s healthcare provider. Such alternatives include physical, occupational and massage therapy, along with chiropractic medicine, acupuncture and over-the-counter medications.

If an opioid proves necessary, parents and caregivers are encouraged to only use the medication as directed, closely monitor their child’s use, safely dispose of any unused pills and talk about the inherent dangers of misuse, abuse and sharing.

## **Morrisey Argues In Purdue Pharma Bankruptcy Case**

By WV Daily News | WVDN AUG 26, 2021

Attorney General Patrick Morrisey pushed Wednesday for greater accountability and more resources for West

Virginia in closing arguments at Purdue Pharma's bankruptcy hearing.

The bankruptcy judge focused particular attention on what the attorney general's argument referred to as the "California Carve Out". It involves an exclusion in the multistate allocation plan that allows California to be the only state not to contribute to an intensity fund designed to allocate additional funds to smaller states hardest hit by the opioid epidemic including West Virginia.

The judge expressed concern in citing bankruptcy law that requires the plan provide the same treatment for each claim or interest of a particular class.

"The allocation formula, coupled with the California cash grab, fails to recognize the disproportionate harm inflicted by opioids upon West Virginia," Morrissey said. "I continue to press every legal lever I can to see fair distribution of recoveries in the opioid litigation and that California does not get more than it deserves at the expense of other states like mine."

The confirmation hearing began earlier this month in the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of New York.

The West Virginia Attorney General's Office had already introduced evidence and expert testimony. The attorney general then gave closing arguments Wednesday.

In April, the attorney general filed his objection in U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of New York, arguing that Purdue's failure to disclose how its multibillion-dollar proposal would be split among states undermined its desire to avoid court challenges to an inherently inequitable arrangement.

Purdue Pharma responded by disclosing publicly the once-closely held Denver Plan, which the attorney general opposes since it would distribute settlement funds largely based on population - not intensity of the problem.

Morrissey filed suit against Purdue Pharma and former chief executive Richard Sackler in May 2019. The lawsuit alleges Purdue Pharma created a false narrative to convince prescribers that opioids are not addictive and that its opioid products were safer than they actually were.

The lawsuit contends Purdue Pharma proliferated a deceptive marketing strategy with reckless disregard for compliance enforcement. It also alleges company sales representatives routinely claimed that OxyContin had no dose ceiling, despite assertions by federal regulators that OxyContin's dose ceiling was evident by adverse reactions.

The lawsuit marked West Virginia's second against Purdue Pharma. The first, filed in 2001, resulted in a \$10 million settlement in 2004. However, that case involved an earlier version of the opioid than the reformulated, so-called tamper-resistant OxyContin that debuted in 2010.

The Purdue matter is one of the West Virginia Attorney General's pending lawsuits against five opioid manufacturers and other national chain distributors.

## **Capito, Manchin Announce Funding For**

# Substance Abuse Prevention

By WV Daily News | WVDN AUG 26, 2021

U.S. Sens. Shelley Moore Capito (R-W.Va.) and Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.), members of the Senate Appropriations Committee, today announced the Fayette County Family Resource Network's eligibility to receive up to \$125,000 through the Drug-Free Communities (DFC) Support Program. This funding is made available through the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) and will help establish collaboration among communities to prevent and reduce substance use among young people.

"In order to properly combat the opioid epidemic and substance use in our communities, we must encourage collaboration between partners on the federal, state, and local level. The Drug-Free Communities (DFC) Support Program is a great example of that inclusive approach and helps prevent our youth in West Virginia from going down the wrong path towards drug addiction. I have often said that community based solutions are among the most effective in our continued battle against the opioid and addiction crisis, and the DFC program is a great example of that. No two places are the same, and our approach towards substance use prevention needs to reflect this. I will continue working hard to make sure our communities have the resources needed to prevent drug addiction and abuse in future generations throughout our state," Sen. Capito said.

"As West Virginia continues to be ravaged by the drug epidemic it is especially heartbreaking to see youth dealing with substance use disorder. The Drug-Free Communities Support Program plays an essential role in combatting and preventing drug misuse among young West Virginians, and I am pleased this funding will support Fayette County Family Resource Network's own Drug-Free Communities Support program. The fight against the drug epidemic is far from over, and I will continue to advocate for funding that helps bolster West Virginia's efforts," Sen. Manchin said.

# Funds Approved To Improve Senior-Care

By WV Daily News | WVDN AUG 26, 2021

U.S. Senators Shelley Moore Capito (R-W.Va.) and Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.), members of the Senate Appropriations Committee, today announced \$5 million in funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to West Virginia's Money Follows the Person (MFP) program, which provides states with funding and flexibility to help Medicaid beneficiaries, including the elderly and people with disabilities, transition from institutional to home- and community-based long-term care settings.

"Given West Virginia's aging population, I have always made it a priority to work to provide the resources that support access to quality care and health services our elderly population relies on," Senator Capito said. "Oftentimes, the best way to do this is through home- and community-based health services, as opposed to institutional care, such as nursing homes. This grant will give our states needed resources and flexibility to help improve the quality of health care and drive down costs for West Virginia's seniors and people with disabilities."

"Ensuring West Virginia's elderly population and individuals with disabilities have access to quality care, whether at home or at community-based care facilities, has always been one of my top priorities. I am pleased

HHS is investing in the Money Follows the Person program, which will give West Virginia additional funding and greater flexibility to support West Virginians who rely on Medicaid. As a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, I will continue to fight for funding to provide quality care for all West Virginians," Senator Manchin said.