

WVDN SEP 09, 2021

THE WEST VIRGINIA **DAILY NEWS** WASHINGTON, D.C. 20540-0001

WVDN **25** YEARS OF CRIMEWATCH

Culturefest Prepares For Cyber Celebration

By [Name] [Email]

...the festival is expected to draw thousands of visitors to the downtown area...

Ronc. Hill Repaving Starts, Delays Expected

By [Name] [Email]

...the repaving project is expected to last several weeks...

Beckley Homeless Crisis Has Multi-Tier Approach

By [Name] [Email]

...the city is working to address the crisis through multiple levels of support...

Alderson Mayor Arrested For Assault, Child Neglect, Burglary

By [Name] [Email]

...the mayor was arrested on multiple charges...

7:57 AM

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WSS Man Once Again Charged With Domestic Assault

By by matthew young | WVDN SEP 09, 2021



A Greenbrier County man is in jail yet again after the latest in a series of alleged domestic altercations. Christian Stuart Lockridge, 46, of White Sulphur Springs has been charged with domestic assault.

This latest incident occurred on the morning of Monday, Sept. 6 at the home of the alleged victim, Lockridge's mother. When law enforcement arrived at the scene, they were advised by the victim that Lockridge had "threatened to pound her face" and to "put her in the dirt."

According to the criminal complaint, the victim further advised that Lockridge "balled up his fists and raised them to her face like he was about to strike her."

The victim then contacted the Greenbrier County 911 Center for assistance, prompting Lockridge to exit the residence on foot. As stated in the complaint, the victim is "scared of her son because he is constantly threatening to beat her and harm her."

Lockridge was located shortly thereafter, walking back towards the residence. When approached by officers, Lockridge reportedly appeared to be intoxicated and was found to be in possession of a bottle of Old Crow whiskey.

The complaint also states that, when questioned about the incident, Lockridge stated that "he was just messing around, but he never threatened his mother."

When Lockridge was advised that he was being placed under arrest, he allegedly began drinking the whiskey

while claiming that “it was his religion (to drink) because he was a viking.”

Lockridge was last arrested on October 27, 2020, after reportedly violating a domestic violence protective order, and was convicted of domestic battery in March of 2015.

Christian Stuart Lockridge is currently being held at Southern Regional Jail on a cash-only bail of \$1,500.

Alderson Mayor Arrested On Assault, Child Neglect, Burglary Charges

By by bobby bordelon | WVDN SEP 09, 2021



Alderson Mayor Travis Copenhaver and Lloyd “Billy” Lightner, Jr. were recently arrested on three felonies, including burglary and child neglect. Both men were released after posting a \$5,000 bail.

According to the criminal complaint, an Alderson resident called the police, stating their “landlord’s son wrecked the house he was renting” and “scared his girlfriend while she was at the residence alone the previous night.” The next day, June 19, an officer with the West Virginia State Police met with a man and a woman at an Alderson residence.

The woman explained to the officer that she brought her vehicle to the residence in order to repair it. She backed into a parking place to “allow the tow truck to be able to access the car easier.” A vehicle from behind the residence then “sped up to where she was parked, boxing her in.”

“Two large men and a juvenile” got out of the vehicle. Lloyd “Billy” Lightner ... approached her vehicle and pulled open her driver’s side door, ... asked what she was doing there and who she was. ... Lightner stroked [the woman’s] arm and back of the neck as he reassured her everything would be alright.”

The man told the officer he “received a call from” the woman, who said “there was someone at the residence that wanted to talk to him. [The man] next heard Lightner’s voice on the phone, [who] kept asking where he was and when he could be there. [The man] hung up the phone and immediately came to the property.”

The man then described arriving to the scene, with Lightner “in his face, cussing him, calling [him] a piece of s*** and a p**** b****.” The man then told Lightner he “was trespassing and was going to force him to call the police.” In addition, he “describes how Travis Copenhaver approaches him from the opposite side of [Lightner] and makes him uncomfortable to the point he takes a few steps back. [The man] stated that he then called 911 ... at 2231 hours on June 17, 2021.”

After Lightner and Copenhaver left, the man “entered the house and discovered his Remington .170 rifle and the Black Bear compound bow missing from the residence.”

The complaint notes both were “drinking beer,” and the State Police officer confirmed Michelob Ultra bottles lying on the ground around the residence.

During their interview, the woman led the officer through the home, into the bedroom and back storage area. Personal items “were in drawers near the bed and away from view, ... but [the men] had went through the drawers and collected” the items. The woman “was embarrassed and nervous to know that her privacy had been invaded.” Another Michelob Ultra was found on the dresser, a type of beer neither the man nor the woman drinks.

The man also explained to the officer that “he keeps his rifle loaded and the bullets were given back to him with the rifle. At the time the rifle was stolen, it was loaded.” The man “also observed drawers containing clothing and private material had been rummaged through.” He later was contacted by Lightner’s mother and “made arrangements to return the above mentioned rifle and compound bow that was stolen during the incident outlined above.”

The man also “stated the bed had been dragged away from the wall, and someone had urinated in his bed [and] also saw a Michelob Ultra bottle still containing suds on his dresser in the bedroom.”

This is not the first incident that has resulted in charges for both Lightner and Copenhaver.

The pair, alongside Shannon Earhart and Timothy Smith, were indicted in 2018 for their role in the investigation of the shooting of Mac Brackenridge by Fredrick Tolliver.

According to testimony given by a state trooper who responded to the initial incident, the four codefendants had been riding in a side-by-side, “drinking some beers,” when they had an altercation with Tolliver. After the incident, the group went out for recreational shooting. On the way back to Earhart’s home, the group then pulled into Tolliver’s driveway “to mess with him after [the earlier] incident,” and Tolliver opened fire on the side-by-side. Brackenridge was paralyzed by the incident.

A Summers County Grand Jury declined to indict Tolliver for the incident. However, Copenhaver, Lightner, Earhart, and Smith each received three counts: conspiracy to commit a misdemeanor, giving false information

to a member of the department of public safety, and obstructing.

Copenhaver would later enter a pretrial diversion through a deal with Summers County Special Prosecutor Jennifer Crane, approved by Summers County Circuit Court Judge Robert Irons.

An agreement between the state and Copenhaver was filed in September 2019, allowing for a pretrial diversion, a program in which first-time criminal offenders perform community service, obtain drug or alcohol treatment, make restitution, or other alternatives. According to the agreement, the state would drop the three-count indictment after six months if Copenhaver completed 75 hours of community service and does not violate any laws.

This would prove to be the case.

"This 20th day of November, 2019 came the defendant, Travis L. Copenhaver, by his council, Joseph Aurcremanne, and tendered his motion to dismiss the above indictment upon the grounds that he has complied with the provisions of the pretrial diversionary agreement. And it appearing that the defendant has satisfactorily completed more than 75 hours of community service and has not violated any municipal, state, or federal law since he entered into the agreement, his motion to dismiss is well taken. ... it is the order, judgement, and decree of this court that the above styled indictment shall be, and is hereby, dismissed with prejudice from the docket of this court and the defendant's bond is released."

Both Copenhaver and Lightner were arrested on September 4 for the alleged June assault, charged with felony burglary, conspiracy, child neglect, and misdemeanor assault.

Bail was approved for Copenhaver on September 4, totaling \$5,000. Lightner was approved for bail September 7, also totaling \$5,000.

Copenhaver declined to comment for this story.



Alderson Mayor Travis Copenhaver

Dear Abby: Thursday, September 9

By Abigail Van Buren | WVDN SEP 09, 2021

Parents Hesitate To Allow Addict Son To Move Back In

Dear Abby: My 24-year-old son is in rehab for the second time. We paid for the first, but we are not financing this one. He has moved in and out of our home since he was 18. We have tried written agreements, but he doesn't follow them. We let him move back in after his first stay in rehab, despite the fact that he had stolen from us and had failed to get a job, etc. He not only didn't get a job, he also didn't help around the house or do any of the other things he had promised. One month later, he began using again. He claims to be taking rehab seriously this time, and wants to move back in with us when he gets out. He says he now realizes he can't stay clean without following the 12 steps, including acknowledging a higher power, and without the support of his family. Over the past year, we spent several thousand dollars helping him solve his problems. Our question is, will we be enabling him by letting him return home, or would it be best to help him transition to a halfway house? — **Supportive Parents**

Dear Supportive Parents: You are caring parents, and I know this has been painful for you. Do NOT allow

your son to move back in without first discussing it with the people at his rehabilitation center whose business it is to work with addicts. From my perspective, it would be better for your son — and for you — to have him pursue his sobriety at a halfway house.

Dear Abby: My son is getting married in a few months. I always believed that if my child loved his partner, I would like him or her and be happy for them. Race, religion, sexual orientation, etc., would never have mattered to me. I found out this week that my future daughter-in-law totally rejects modern medicine. My son is a cystic fibrosis carrier. She refuses to be tested because “no one in her family has ever had CF.” Our family can say the same thing, but both of my sons and I are CF carriers. She plans home-births with her mother as her midwife and believes vaccinations are harmful. My son supports none of this, but plans to marry her anyway. They want to get pregnant right away and eventually have five children. She’s only 21, and intelligent, but she has been home-schooled, and her father does not allow internet in their home. I feel her position on medicine is due to not being informed. Her religion does not forbid it. I am heartbroken. Is there anything I can do? — **Heartbroken in Michigan**

Dear Heartbroken: Not a lot, I’m sorry to say. You could point out to your son that he should insist he and his fiancée have genetic testing done before starting a family, which could avert a tragic and preventable problem. You could print out material from respected sources — the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation would be among them — but you cannot force the fiancée to accept it. Other than that, all you can do is cross your fingers and pray the young couple will catch a lucky break in a game of genetic roulette.

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 or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

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Dear Recycle Lady: Thursday, September 9

By Recycle Lady | WVDN SEP 09, 2021

Dear Recycle Lady,

Last week you mentioned Bees Wraps as an alternative to small plastic bags. What are Bees Wraps and how are they used. — **Like New Products**

Dear Like New Products,

According to <https://greenerideal.com>, Bees Wraps are made from 100% organic cotton sheets infused with beeswax, jojoba oil and tree resin. They are washable in cool water and reusable, as well as biodegradable. Bees Wraps feel waxy and are an eco-friendly way to store food in a bowl using the heat of your hands to press the wrap around the bowl. They come in several sizes and can be made into a bag, as well as a cover for a container. I have several wraps that I have used many times and the more I use them, the more pliable they become. Directions say to wash the wraps and dry, then scrunch them up several times. This makes the wraps very pliable and great to use. Caution — do not wash Bees Wraps in hot water as it will melt the wax.

Dear Recycle Lady,

Does Greenbrier Recycling Center recycle old cellphones? — **Caller**

Yes, old cellphones can be recycled at the Recycling Center with electronics. When you are at the center go to the door for aluminum cans and put the phone in the yellow basket by the aluminum can door. According to www.Earth911.com, for every million cell phones recycled, 3,500 lbs. of copper and 75 lbs. of gold can be recovered and reused. Plus, when electronics are recycled not only are valuable resources recycled but toxic materials are disposed of properly and e-wastes are reduced.

Dear Recycle Lady,

What is a Green Hotel? — **Traveler**

Dear Traveler,

Green Hotels are hotels that have achieved a certificate of sustainability. However, some are greener than others. There are LEED-certified buildings that are constructed with sustainability. There are hotels that have made green improvements and hotels that give back by volunteering or making donations. Unfortunately, there are some hotels that use greenwashing techniques to appear to be green but are not. Earth911 says that a few major hotel chains have shown a concerted effort to green their operations, including Hilton, Marriott, Hyatt, and Starwood Hotels. There are numerous certification programs available to help travelers choose accommodations, including Green Globe, Green Key Global, Travelife, Earth Check, and GreenLeaders. Go to www.earth911.com/travel-living/green for more information.

Good News: Kudos to West Virginia and the Appalachian Botanical Company. A former strip mine in Boone County is being reclaimed by the Appalachian Botanical Company by growing lavender and raising bees on the former mining site. The buds and stems of the lavender are converted into essential oils, honey, body lotion, and other products. Not only are they creating jobs in an economically distressed area, but they are also putting 70 acres of former strip mines back to good use and cleaning up the environment.

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

Preview: East Welcomes Robert C Byrd in Home Opener

By by brandon baker | WVDN SEP 09, 2021

The Greenbrier East Spartans (2-0) have gotten off to what some may call a surprising start after two huge wins on the road at Point Pleasant and at Woodrow Wilson.

Those two victories are extremely important to the Spartans' hopes of another state playoff berth in part because of who East will play this Friday, Sept. 10 in their home opener, and that is another Flying Eagle, this time from Robert C. Byrd High School.

RCB (1-0) comes in as one of the best teams in West Virginia, fresh off a 57-0 shellacking of Elkins. Their first game of the season was postponed due to Covid-19 so they are fresh and hungry for action on the field. They also feature a plethora of players who can strike quickly, led by senior running back Jeremiah King.

In the win over Elkins, King ran for 157 yards in the first half, played one series in the third quarter and sat out the rest of the night. He is only nine yards away from 5,000 in his career, a number that not many players accomplish.

King is a player known across the state, but he is not the only one on the team that succeeds at a high level.

Freshman Latrell Jones also topped 100 yards with 119 and a score.

Nathaniel Junkins, Aidan Morris and Nicholas George also are big factors for the Eagles.

RCB ran for over 400 yards last week.

RCB played in the state championship game last season and lost, but the talent and experience is still very strong in Clarksburg.

The Spartans are led early on by sophomore running back Ian Cline who has rushed for 235 yards and has three total touchdowns.

Quarterback Monquelle Davis has thrown for 215 yards and has run for 48 and accounted for five touchdowns. Davis has not had to do a whole lot so far this year, but when he gets dialed in and focused, he is capable of taking over a game by himself.

Bryson Ormsbee leads the team in catches with four, is second on the team in yards with 74 and tied for the team lead with two touchdown receptions.

For the Spartans to win this Friday night, obviously the key is to contain King as much as they can. On the flip side, King will almost inevitably get a lot of yards and maybe a touchdown or two.

The East defense, led by Kamon Anderson, JT Spencer, Jarett McHale, Garrett Bennett, Jacob Wickline, Levi Wagner and others, will need to try to stop the other guys from having their way on the field.

Last week, Cline had 39 carries and allowed the Spartans to control the clock and win the time of possession. To contain King, he may need 50 touches this week.

This is a tough game to get a clear read on. On one hand, the Spartans are playing at a very high level for coach Ray Lee. They are executing their game plans to perfection and doing exactly what they need to do to come out on top.

On the other hand, King presents a lot of problems for every team that plays him. He is good enough to not win a game by himself but certainly control it. East has already allowed a 100-yard rusher — Point Pleasant's Gavin Jeffers — and Jeffers does not hold a candle to RCB's star.

Unfortunately for Spartan fans, I see a hard-fought game, but a loss coming. Robert C. Byrd is just deep at most positions and their experience of playing in the title game last year will carry a heavy weight on Friday. However, I could be completely wrong as the Spartans have shocked us all in the first two weeks.

Prediction:

Robert C. Byrd 41

Greenbrier East 23

Flag Disposal Event Scheduled For September 11

By WV Daily News | WVDN SEP 09, 2021

The American Legion Greenbrier Post 26 Ronceverte will be holding the annual flag disposal ceremony on Saturday, September 11, beginning at 2 p.m. at the Ronceverte Island Park Amphitheater.

The public is welcomed and encouraged to attend and help with the success of this event.

Call 304-661-4979 and speak to commander Burdette for any further information.

Culturefest Prepares for Cyber Celebration

By by rebecca stalnaker | WVDN SEP 09, 2021

Culturefest World Music & Arts Festival West Virginia is a festival held annually in Pipestem. It brings together different cultures through music, dance and other forms of art in a celebration of diversity. In 2020, the festival went digital. Due to the pandemic as well as other considerations, the festival will remain digital for the 2021 season, which marks its 18th year.

A multitude of performances, workshops and discussions will take place via online streaming for four days beginning on Sept. 9. The stream will be available on the Culturefest website, www.culturefestwv.com as well as Facebook and YouTube. According to an announcement posted on the festival's Facebook page, organizers hope to be able to return to a live experience in 2022.

Musical performers include The Kind Thieves, Chupacabras, Spaceship Earth, Infinite Third and many more. There will also be dance performances including one by HeadSpin Hoop Troupe. Dance workshops will be held by Silver Arrow Flow, Project Bring Me 2 Life Network and Reena Shah. Yoga will be held by Joanie Lea Boyle.

The cyber event is currently set to begin at 5 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 9. It will continue until 9 p.m. and then continue between 10 p.m. and midnight. Friday and Saturday will both stream between 2 and 6 p.m. as well as 8 p.m. and midnight. On Sunday, the stream will be between 2 and 6 p.m.

For more information on Culturefest World Music & Arts Festival 2021, visit the website or the festival's Facebook page under "Culturefest World Music & Arts Festival."

Raleigh Solar Project Granted Permit Extension

By by autumn shelton | WVDN SEP 09, 2021

Raleigh County Commissioners have agreed to provide Raleigh Solar with a 12-month conditional use permit extension that will give American Electric Power (AEP) the time needed to get up to speed with the project.

According to Raleigh County Attorney Bill Roop, who spoke before the commission during their regular meeting on Sept. 7, he received a letter on Aug. 30 from Raleigh Solar officials asking for the extension.

“Part of the problem is they are waiting on AEP to get some of the transmission and get some of the requirements that AEP has to get them up to speed and online,” Roop stated. He advised the commissioners to go forward with the extension.

Raleigh Solar, now owned by Enel Green Power based in Italy, is planning a 90-megawatt solar energy generating facility to be located at Grandview.

The facility, initially proposed under Denver-based Dakota Renewable Energy as an exempt wholesale generator, will include 250,000 individual solar panels and span across approximately 529 acres of agricultural land and former wooded areas, according to the siting agreement filed by the West Virginia Public Service Commission (PSC) on Oct. 5, 2020. The facility will connect to overhead 138kV transmission lines owned by AEP.

Raleigh County Administrator Jay Quesenberry told the West Virginia Daily News after the commission meeting that the conditional use permit extension just gives those at Raleigh Solar more time to deal with all the snags that come along with such a large project.

“They are putting \$90 million into this project,” Quesenberry said of Raleigh Solar. “It’s a great investment to have in Raleigh County.” He added that this is the first solar farm in the state.

In a conversation with Raleigh Solar officials earlier this year, Quesenberry stated that they only had nice things to say about West Virginia.

“They said that West Virginia was the best state that they have — the easiest to work with county and state government — and they have 11 different states,” Quesenberry noted. “They like the way West Virginia does business and they are looking for other investments in the state, as well.”

“When states get these kinds of investments, considered green investments for renewable power, other companies look at that —that we are doing green things here, and they want to invest in the state, as well,” Quesenberry continued. “They want to invest in states that are doing good things for the environment and that’s a good attraction for other businesses and other factories. Hopefully, this will create the domino effect — this happens and other things will come.”

The site, located adjacent to Grandview Road, has high voltage transmission lines running overhead, which, according to Quesenberry, made it the perfect location to construct a solar power facility because it allows AEP to easily build a substation and connect the facility to those transmission lines. However, even being that close to the transmission lines, it will still take Raleigh Solar a minimum of three years to connect to the grid.

The PSC has ordered that Raleigh Solar begin “continuous construction of the facility in five years, to complete construction within 10 years, and to enter into a decommissioning agreement with the Raleigh County Commission,” the siting agreement states.

On Sept. 1, 2020, the Raleigh County Commission entered into a payment-in-lieu-of-tax agreement with Raleigh Solar. This agreement will financially help Raleigh Solar as they build the facility, Quesenberry said. Additionally, the commission agreed to set aside \$50,000 for site decommissioning when the time comes.

During the recent county commission meeting, commissioners postponed clarification on the decommissioning agreement until Raleigh Solar could provide them with additional information.

According to the Raleigh Solar Project website, the solar farm will generate enough electricity to power 16,000 homes. Facility output will be sold into the PJM interconnection wholesale electricity market.

“To think that we will be generating enough power in Raleigh County for 16,000 homes is pretty exciting because we don’t have anything like that,” Quesenberry said. “You don’t hear of any new power plants being built, I mean, this is a really good thing for the community and the state in general.”

It is anticipated that the majority of funds the county will receive from the solar project will go into Raleigh County Schools.

Independence High School To Remain On Remote Learning This Week

By by autumn shelton | WVDN SEP 09, 2021

Independence High School in Raleigh County will remain on remote learning for the remainder of the week.

According to Raleigh County Schools Superintendent David Price, this decision was made due to the high number of Covid-19 cases and students in quarantine.

Students will return on Monday, Sept. 13.

No athletic events or practices will be held until Monday when in-person learning resumes.

Ronceverte Hill Repaving Starts, Delays Expected

By by bobby bordelon | WVDN SEP 09, 2021



An over \$700,000 project is expected to delay traffic on Ronceverte Hill for the next few days.

Crews with the West Virginia Department of Highways and West Virginia Paving are working on Route 219 at the top of Ronceverte Hill, the end of the one-way split sometimes called the Fairlea 500.

Maintenance Engineer Jim Moore explained to The West Virginia Daily News that the project hopes to keep one of the main routes to Ronceverte in good shape.

“Looking at the condition of the roadway and the amount of traffic on that particular section of roadway, it was just time to maintain the surface,” Moore said. “What we’re going to do is mill off the existing surface that is deteriorated and then we’re just going to pave the road. Then we’ll reapply the pavement markings. ... It’s a fairly straightforward project for us — mill it, pave it back, put new pavement markings on it.”



Crews on Sept. 7.

Moore noted that funding for the new surface came from the federal government.

“It was a federal aid, what we call a 3R, project — resurfacing, renovation, and reconstruction project. It was a routine federal aid project. It’s approximately \$760,000.”

West Virginia Paving is taking on the project after putting in the lowest bid for the work.

“While they’re working, they are required to maintain at least one lane of alternating traffic. It could cause some congestion and delays. Then, every evening, they are opening it up to two lanes of traffic, one lane in each direction. Outside of work time, people should be able to get through there fairly easily. It’s only when they’re working that it’ll be more restricted.

Moore asked those traveling through the area to be patient with work crews.

“As with anything, we do ask people to seek alternate routes if they can and if they can’t, ... leave a little earlier, obey the traffic signs and the flagmen on the job. Our main goal is to get people through as efficiently or as safely as possible while this is ongoing. ... Everybody wants better roads — just be patient with us as we try to repair that one and try to get it opened back up.”

And how long until the project is completely done?

“The start date was September 3, and I assume that was for milling. They’re estimated completion date is about September 17. That’s subject to change for various reasons, the weather or if they have equipment or staffing issues. ... The last schedule I have says they hope to be done by late this week or early next week.”

Moore noted the new work ties in well with a previous project — using federal CARES Act money, In 2020, Gov. Jim Justice instructed the West Virginia Department of Highways (DOH) to create the Medical Access Road program in order to improve hospital accessibility. The district, covering five counties, received approximately \$5.6 million through the program.

Before this program, a common sight after heavy rain in Fairlea is Route 219 covered in water, which can interfere with transportation to and from the hospital. In September 2020, a \$2 million dollar project through the Medical Access Road program brought new paving, surfacing, water drainage, and a huge change to the entrance of the Greenbrier Valley Medical Center to Route 219, stretching from Burger King to McDonalds.

“Hopefully that will tie very nicely to our project we completed in Fairlea,” Moore said. “We’re trying to improve that entire area.”



Crews on Sept. 7.

Rising COVID Numbers Forces Cancellation Of 'Arts In The Park'

By WV Daily News | WVDN SEP 09, 2021

Arts in the Park scheduled for Saturday, Sept. 18 has been cancelled.

The Ronceverte Public Library Board of Trustees and the Arts in the Park Committee feel that with the rising numbers of Covid-19 cases, it would be best not to hold this event at this time.

Our sincere thanks to all of the people that have helped us during the planning and organization of this event and to the WVDN for working with us to promote this event.

Beckley Homeless Crisis Has Multi-Tier Approach

By by autumn shelton | WVDN SEP 09, 2021

It is time for those in the city of Beckley to really work together to address the rising homeless population.

In recent years, the small city of around 16,500 permanent residents, has been experiencing what many are considering a humanitarian crisis as more and more homeless persons arrive in the city. In many instances, these newcomers must resort to sleeping in city parks, asking locals for money, hanging out at local businesses and utilizing overwhelmed support services.

Members of the Beckley Common Council have been hearing from concerned residents for some time about the need to do something, but finding a solution isn't an easy task.

At their most recent meeting on Aug. 24, Council Member Robert Dunlap suggested that the city form a committee to address the homelessness issue. After a brief discussion, the committee, mostly consisting of council members, was formed. They have since held their first meeting and more are planned.

According to Dunlap, who spoke with The West Virginia Daily News on Sept. 2, committee members are dedicated to creating attainable and measurable goals to help find ways to address the issue. They are looking at what is working in other cities regarding housing and substance abuse and mental health programs.

He added that they want to find different and creative ways to address the problem, including working with local organizations that have had their "boots on the ground" for some time.

One creative way the committee is learning more about the problem is by talking to those they see experiencing homelessness in the uptown area. A committee member has decided to go to Word Park and other locations to talk to people, figure out what is going on and what could be done to help, Dunlap noted. Committee members also want to "get their arms around homelessness versus vagrancy."

The city of Beckley has numerous programs that help people get much-needed services, Dunlap explained. In some cases, those persons receiving the services are not truly homeless in that they have apartments or other places to stay, but they do come and later "mill around in parks."

"Everyone is aware that we have a loitering problem," Dunlap said of those renting and doing business in uptown Beckley. "We all see this problem, but it is not litigious. You cannot criminally convict a person because they are hanging out in Shoemaker Square or blocking doorways and being obtrusive on properties."

He said that he doesn't want to shame anyone in this situation because no one should be "vilified." Instead, he would like to see those working and doing business in uptown Beckley not be placed in uncomfortable situations because they find themselves on the receiving end of unwanted attention from people who are hanging out.

He noted that some business owners have installed surveillance systems because there have been instances where businesses have been vandalized or broken into, but by and large crimes committed are just nuisance crimes.

"It has been years since we have had people assaulted within city limits," Dunlap stated.

He added that those who choose to locate their business in uptown Beckley have the support of city officials who want to find a solution and make the uptown area a better, welcoming environment for everyone.

Dunlap noted that the committee meetings are closed to the public, but he plans to update residents on meeting highlights to keep everyone informed.

While Dunlap's goals are to work with committee members to find possible solutions to the homeless/vagrancy situation, from the law enforcement perspective, their goal is to make sure that everyone in Beckley is safe.

Beckley Police Chief Lonnie Christian said that his department is always looking for ways to help those experiencing homelessness, although they are limited in what they can do.

Officers are problem solvers, so it makes sense that when all else fails, people call the police, he explained. Of

course, if a person is being harassed, or if a person experiencing homelessness is breaking the law, or getting ready to, law enforcement can step in to address the matter.

“We cannot arrest a person just because they are asleep on public property — like in parks or on public sidewalks,” Christian stated. “What we are dealing with is a larger societal issue.”

He said it is important to find ways to stop the influx of those experiencing homelessness into the city and then to coordinate how to get them much-needed services. It is important to work with communities outside of Beckley so that they know not to send their homeless population into the city.

“We have found that surrounding areas, because of the community services in Beckley, will bring people here and drop them off,” Christian stated. “They don’t coordinate with our local services to see if they can obtain help, or to let us know they are coming. They just get them a bus ticket or drop them off expecting them to get help. A lot of times that causes our resources to be stretched very thin.”

He added that he has seen a noticeable increase in the homeless population over the last five years and that there have been several instances where church and community groups have brought those experiencing homelessness into the city — believing it is the right thing to do. At times, people arrive in Beckley via the Greyhound bus terminal.

“They have come from Logan County and Charleston. They have come from a lot of surrounding communities. We have made contact with people who are homeless and have commonly found people from as far away as California and Florida,” Christian said. “A lot of people don’t talk about how they got here, but we have had them from all over.”

Christian noted that it is hard to determine how many people experiencing homelessness are in Beckley because people are continually coming into the city and leaving.

“Most often, when the weather changes, officers find people living in abandoned structures,” Christian said. “You don’t see a lot of homeless persons just sleeping out in the open.”

When an officer does make contact with a person who states they are homeless, he or she will try to get them help, Christian said. “An officer will talk to them and try to help find resources, like taking them to the homeless shelter or trying to get them to a place where they have family or friends.”

“Each situation is different,” Christian continued. “A lot of people have mental health issues or substance abuse issues and trying to get them connected to different resources can be very difficult.”

Christian encourages the public to contact the police if they need assistance, or if they see people living in abandoned structures, not only because of the fire risk but because some of the structures aren’t safe for anyone to be inside.

Additionally, he noted that some of those experiencing homelessness do set up small camps throughout the city, including in wooded areas, but those camps typically only contain up to five people.

“It’s frustrating. It’s frustrating for everyone. It’s frustrating for the business owners. It’s frustrating for people who want to visit and come uptown. It’s frustrating for the officers who have a limited ability to respond to a lot of situations,” Christian concluded. “That’s why we need to have other resources beyond law enforcement. If you have a toolbox, you need to have more tools than just a hammer to deal with situations. Let’s pull together resources on a county level.”

In addition to The Carpenter’s Corner hot meal program, the Salvation Army, Helping Hands Community

Resource Center, One Voice and many others, the Raleigh County Community Action Association (RCCAA) is just one community resource program that offers help to those who need it most.

Leah Deitz, marketing and development specialist for RCCAA, said that the organization has been around since the late 1950s providing much-needed assistance to those in Raleigh, Fayette, Greenbrier, Summers, Kanawha, Monroe, Mercer, McDowell, Logan, Boone and Nicholas counties. Part of this assistance includes working with those at an emergency homeless shelter named Pine Haven.

Pine Haven, located at 103 S. Eisenhower Drive in Beckley, is a 150-bed facility that houses men, women, children and families. Most of those who use the facility are familiar faces, but there are new faces all the time, Deitz said.

Currently, beds are available in the shelter, but that is anticipated to change during the winter months.

The holidays are typically a peak time for the shelter, Deitz said. However, as the weather gets cooler, the shelter becomes one of the only places where people can go.

At the shelter, clients are served three hot meals per day, provided clothing, access to job placement services, health care and any other social services that may be needed.

For those who need emergency housing, they are welcome to simply show up at the facility. The RCCAA also has caseworkers who go out into the community to identify those experiencing homelessness.

“We are looking for and trying to identify people who may be in need of our services,” Deitz said. “There is a limit on how long people can stay at the shelter. For those who have nowhere else to go, they are referred to our housing program to try and locate affordable housing.”

“Typically, we assist about 150-200 people per year,” Deitz said of the housing program. “While those numbers may be a bit skewed last year and this year, due to everything that is going on, that would be typical for us. That does include families, not just individuals.”

The pandemic has created a different situation where individuals have either lost their jobs or have had their hours limited. In response to this, the RCCAA has a temporary program available that will help pay mortgage or rental payments and utility bills. This program is also available to anyone who lives within 200 percent of the federal poverty line, Deitz explained.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, RCCAA has served 102 people in Raleigh County with rental assistance and three people with mortgage assistance.

“We have spent \$72,300 in rental and mortgage payments that help prevent people from being evicted or at risk of losing their homes,” Deitz stated. “The ultimate goal is to move people off the streets and into a sustainable housing situation. That is our mission.”

“The difference between homelessness and stable housing is sometimes only distinguished by one missed payment,” she noted.

RCCAA also partners with the local head start program to ensure that all children can get off to a good start, and New River Transit Authority to help provide people with transportation.

Organizations like the RCCAA and those who have made it their life’s work to help prevent homelessness will no doubt become a valuable asset as the new Beckley homeless committee embarks on their mission to find solutions.

"I think the most important thing to know when discussing homelessness is that this is a multi-faceted issue that stems from many sources," Deitz stated. "There are mental health issues that involve everything from substance use disorders, to trauma, to catastrophic life events. All of these things play a role in creating homelessness. In addition to these struggles, there has been a worldwide pandemic and the massive closures and unemployment associated with it."

"There is a growing awareness of homelessness and some of the many stigmas and facets that go along with it," Deitz added. "Addressing some of those things can go a long way in helping with the issue. Being able to openly talk about homelessness, and the things that contribute to it, is the first step in addressing the issue. However, it's something that a lot of people don't like to talk about."

"Obviously, this is beginning to happen, though, or that wouldn't be what the city of Beckley is doing," Deitz said, referencing the newly established committee. "It is something that people are becoming more aware of."

For those who need assistance, the RCCAA can be reached by calling 304-252-6396.

Beckley Kids Classic Festival Parade To Take Place This Saturday

By autumn shelton | WVDN SEP 09, 2021

The Kids Classic Festival parade is scheduled to take place on Sat., Sept. 11 in Beckley.

According to Beckley Events Director Jill Moorefield, the theme of the parade is "America Strong."

Although the parade will not have as many entries as it has in previous years due to the pandemic, numerous floats and walking groups, including the Woodrow Wilson High School marching band, the Beni Kedem Highlanders Bagpipe Band, Lake Stephens, Glade Springs Fright Nights, local jeep clubs and many more, will still be on hand to show off their patriotism and honor first responders, healthcare workers and the military, Moorefield said.

In addition to the parade, vendors will be located throughout uptown Beckley during the Kids Street Fair from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m.

Parade line-up for vehicles will begin at 10 a.m. at Park Middle School. Walking groups will line up at the Beckley Intermodal Gateway Plaza.

The parade begins at 11 a.m. at Park Middle School traveling along Third Street, to Neville Street, to Heber and Main Streets, to Kanawha Avenue and ending at Prince Street, Moorefield said.

"We hope everybody can come out and have a good time," Moorefield stated.

9/11 Remembrance Ceremony In Beckley Has Been Canceled

By by autumn shelton | WVDN SEP 09, 2021

The September 11 Remembrance Ceremony scheduled to take place at Word Park beside the 9/11 steel memorial in Beckley on Saturday morning has been canceled.

According to Beckley 9/11 Committee Member Sherrie Hunter, the decision to cancel this ceremony was not an easy one to make.

“It really breaks our hearts,” Hunter said. “This year would have been our ninth year of paying tribute. We didn’t want to cancel, but felt it was the best thing to do because of Covid and the fact that Raleigh County is in the red.”

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, Hunter continued. She said that committee members wanted to read the names of all those who were killed that day at the ceremony.

Hunter encourages everyone who wishes to pay tribute to those we lost on 9/11 to attend the Parade of Lights ceremony that will take place later Saturday evening as first responders travel from Independence High School to Linda K. Epling Stadium. The parade begins at dusk.

She added that she hopes the Remembrance Ceremony will return to Beckley next year.

“It is so special for our community,” Hunter said. “We never want to forget.”

Raleigh County Schools Now Requiring Face Masks For Indoor Facilities

By by autumn shelton | WVDN SEP 09, 2021

Raleigh County Schools has now issued a statement that wearing face masks will be mandatory inside all school buildings.

According to Raleigh County Schools Superintendent David Price, beginning on Thursday, Sept. 9, individuals inside all indoor facilities in Raleigh County Schools should start wearing their masks. Special medical exclusions will be considered.

He noted that Raleigh County Schools will continue to follow the guidance of local health officials, including the Raleigh County Health Department, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Carnegie Hall Fall Classes An Workshops

By WV Daily News | WVDN SEP 09, 2021



As part of its commitment to lifelong learning, Carnegie Hall offers a series of classes and workshops to enlighten and inspire learners of all ages. These unique learning opportunities are taught primarily in small group settings at the Hall. The Fall 2021 Classes & Workshops options are now available.

Starting on September 18 and continuing through December, classes and workshops include pottery, painting, music, basket weaving, song writing, soap making, quilting, and movement. All of these classes are in-person and participants are socially distanced and required to wear masks in the Hall.

For a complete list of classes and workshops and to enroll visit carnegiehallwv.org/classes-and-workshops or pick up a Classes & Workshops brochure at 611 Church Street, Lewisburg, West Virginia.

Carnegie Hall is a nonprofit organization supported by individual contributions, grants, and fundraising efforts such as TOOT and The Carnegie Hall Gala. The Hall is located at 611 Church Street, Lewisburg, WV. For more information, please call 304.645.7917 or visit www.carnegiehallwv.org.

WVSOM Hosts 'Kids Fit' Events

By WV Daily News | WVDN SEP 09, 2021



The West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine's (WVSOM) Center for Rural and Community Health (CRCH) is working with a group of WVSOM students to host a series of Fit Kids events aimed at promoting nutrition and fitness among area children ages 6 to 11.

The Fit Kids program began with a pilot event in May and continued with a welcome event on Aug. 22. Each session includes games and opportunities for education centered on a particular theme. Masks are required, social distancing is observed and parents must remain with children during the events. WVSOM students and CRCH staff will oversee the activities.

Joyce Martin, CRCH program and outreach coordinator, said students envisioned the Fit Kids program as a way to connect with area young people and ensure they remain physically active.

"Going through a pandemic, our youth were ready for some normalcy in their lives," Martin said. "In working with medical students to offer this program, we're educating youth about making healthy choices, encouraging physical activity and promoting socialization while focusing on the osteopathic principles of mind, body and spirit. The program is not only educational, it's also about building relationships with youth and their families, and most importantly about having fun."

Matt Parsley, of WVSOM's Class of 2024, said he and three other students designed Fit Kids to have a positive,

long-lasting effect on the communities surrounding the osteopathic medical school.

“We recognized a need for safe activities that focused on the well-being of our community’s youth,” Parsley said. “Programs like Fit Kids help provide the universal benefits that education about nutrition, stress and physical activity can bring. Preventive interventions allow us to give kids stimulating, fun, age-appropriate activities that double as a sturdy foundation for healthy choices across their lifespan.”

All events begin at 9 a.m. Those who would like to register or learn more may email Brooke Seamans at bseamans@osteo.wvsom.edu.

If changes to the program occur as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, they will be noted on WVSOM’s social media channels.

Upcoming Fit Kids dates include:

Sept. 18: “Gardens and Growing,” at the Clingman Center for Community Engagement in Lewisburg, will allow children to see hands-on gardening activities and learn age-appropriate information about nutrition.

Oct. 2: “Wild and Wonderful,” at the Greenbrier River Trail in Caldwell, will involve a nature walk, including information about outdoor physical activity and foraging.

Oct. 16: “It’s Spooky Season,” at the Marvel Center in Rupert, will incorporate Halloween themes into health education.

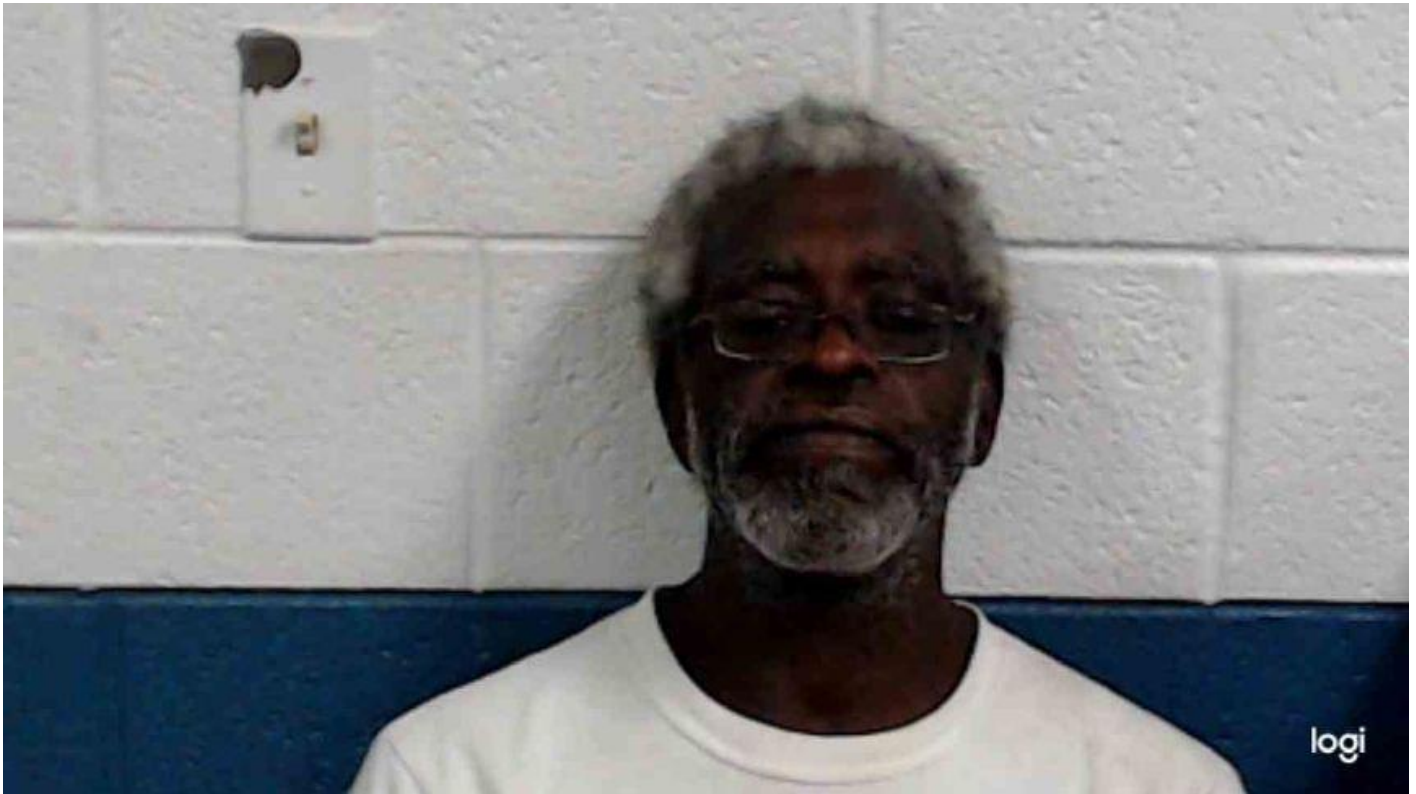
Oct. 30: “The Great Pumpkin,” at the Clingman Center for Community Engagement, also will incorporate Halloween themes.

Nov. 6: “Let’s Be Yogis,” at the Clingman Center for Community Engagement, will teach attendees about the effects of stress on health and explain physical practices that can help.

Nov. 20: “Turkey Trot Time,” at the Clingman Center for Community Engagement, will focus on cardiovascular fitness.

Rainelle Man Arrested After Allegedly Stealing Truck

By by matthew young | WVDN SEP 09, 2021



A Greenbrier County man was arrested on the morning of Thursday, Aug. 26 after allegedly committing several thefts, including shoplifting and stealing a vehicle. Kenneth Lee Williams, 60, of Rainelle, has been charged with shoplifting, robbery and grand larceny.

On Saturday, July 24, law enforcement responded to the Dollar General store located at 233 Nicholas Street in Rupert to investigate a shoplifting complaint.

According to the criminal complaint, Williams entered the store, removed two cellular phone chargers from the shelf and allegedly attempted to “return” them to the sales clerk for cash. Upon being denied the return, Williams left the store with the chargers still in his possession. The complaint further states that store officials followed Williams out of the store, and were able to recover the merchandise without further incident. Williams had previously been banned from Dollar General as a result of an earlier shoplifting incident that occurred in 2017. In addition, Williams has five previous, unrelated shoplifting convictions.

Approximately three-and-a-half weeks later, on Aug. 17, law enforcement was once again dispatched in response to Williams’ behavior. However, this time to the home of an acquaintance of Williams.

As stated in the criminal complaint, Williams had arrived at the residence requesting money. As the residents of the home were concerned for their safety due to Williams’ “agitated physical presence,” they provided him with \$20 so that he would leave. Prior to his leaving, however, Williams allegedly “walked through the house as if he was searching for something.” Sometime after Williams’ departure, the residents became aware that the keys to their 2003 Ford Ranger pickup truck were missing. Williams was located shortly thereafter on 2nd Street in Rainelle, in close proximity to where the vehicle was found parked.

Kenneth Lee Williams is currently being held at Southern Regional Jail on a property/surety-bond of \$50,000.

Marlinton Man Charged With Child Neglect

By by matthew young | WVDN SEP 09, 2021



A Pocahontas County man is in jail after a July incident in which he allegedly provided alcohol to a minor before an accident led to the minor being injured. Robert James Long, 44, of Marlinton has been charged with contributing to the delinquency of a child, as well as one count of child neglect resulting in injury.

On Friday, July 16, law enforcement was dispatched to the area of 6th Street in Marlinton in response to reports of “a juvenile that had been given alcohol and fell out of the back of a pickup truck.”

According to the criminal complaint, Long had been on a camping trip with a male juvenile, and the two had begun consuming beer at approximately 7 a.m. Upon the officers’ arrival, the juvenile reportedly advised that he and Long “were driving somewhere and he fell out of the back of the truck.” The juvenile further advised officers that he had consumed “about 24 beers.”

The juvenile reportedly suffered a concussion as a result of the incident.

Robert James Long is currently being held at Tygart Valley Regional Jail on a surety/cash bond of \$10,500.

TN Man Arrested After Allegedly Being Uncooperative With Police

By by matthew young | WVDN SEP 09, 2021



A Tennessee man was arrested on the afternoon of Wednesday, Sept. 1 after allegedly being uncooperative with police officers. Kevin Shane Chapman, 49, of Johnson City, Tennessee has been charged with disorderly conduct, public intoxication and obstructing an officer.

Shortly after 4 p.m. on the date in question, officers from the Lewisburg Police Department observed a male (later identified as Kevin Shane Chapman) and a female seated in a Toyota Tundra pickup truck that was parked in front of the Ruby Tuesday's restaurant on Coleman Drive. Officers approached the vehicle and began speaking with Chapman, who was in the passenger seat.

As stated in the criminal complaint by the arresting officer, "Chapman appeared to be intoxicated as I observed the odor of an alcoholic beverage on his breath, his speech was slurred and incoherent, and he had poor coordination."

Officers further report observing "several alcoholic containers in the vehicle." Both Chapman and his female companion claimed that their driver had left them there while he went to an unknown location.

Officers then asked Chapman to exit the vehicle "several times and he refused, verbally and physically by holding the vehicle door closed."

The complaint states that the officers opened the truck's door, and, according to the arresting officer, "I then relieved Mr. Chapman of the great burden of exiting the vehicle under his own power and volition by attempting an arm drag to remove him from the vehicle. Mr. Chapman actively resisted by bracing his body

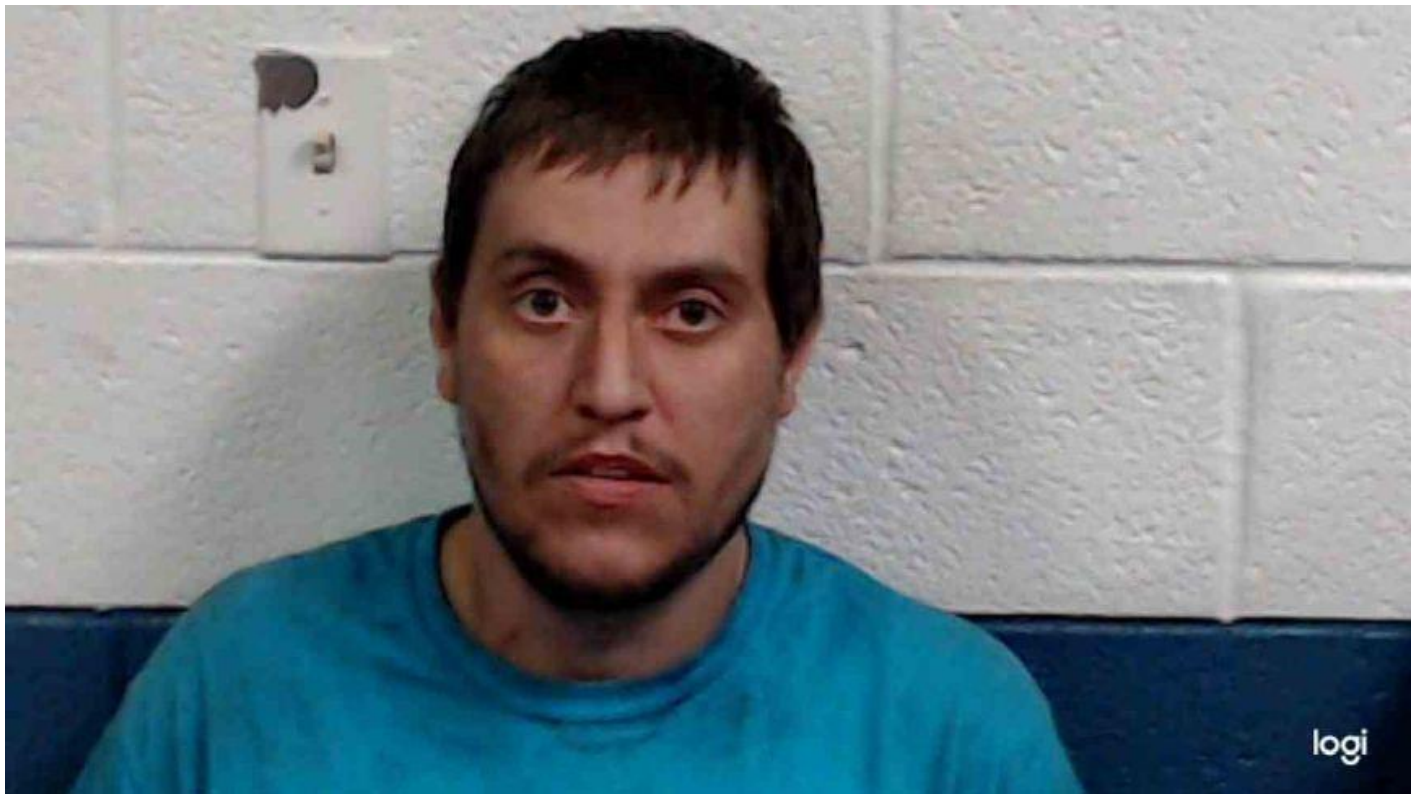
against the seat and interior of the vehicle. (Second officer) then assisted by taking hold of Mr. Chapman's free arm and with a team effort he was removed from the vehicle and assisted to the ground using the minimum amount of force necessary."

The arresting officer goes to state; "During the course of the struggle, Mr. Chapman received minor lacerations to his face and knee and EMS was promptly requested for the injuries. Fairlea EMS arrived and transported Mr. Chapman to Greenbrier Valley Medical Center for treatment."

Kevin Shane Chapman is currently being held at Southern Regional Jail on a surety/cash bond of \$2,500.

Rainelle Man Charged With Arson After Setting Fire To Property

By by matthew young | WVDN SEP 09, 2021



A Greenbrier County man was arrested after a residential fire in the early morning hours of Aug. 22 led investigators to determine that the blaze had been intentionally set. Charles Lacy Adkins, 31, of Rainelle has been charged with first-degree arson.

Shortly after midnight on the date in question, the Rainelle Fire Department responded to and extinguished a house fire at a Poplar Street residence. The subsequent investigation revealed "irregular burn patterns with an odor of an ignitable liquid," prompting a request for further investigation by the State Fire Marshal's office.

According to the criminal complaint, a search warrant was obtained for the property on Tuesday, Aug. 24 for an "origin and cause investigation." Charles Lacy Adkins was found to be present at the property at the time

the warrant was served. Adkins was interviewed by investigators at that time.

As explained in the criminal complaint, while being interviewed, “Adkins stated, in substance, that he had intentionally set fire to a piece of furniture located in the kitchen area of the residence. Adkins further stated that he had taken gasoline from a small jug similar to a bleach jug and soaked a rag in the gasoline, placed the rag on the furniture item, and lit the rag on fire.”

Adkins further reportedly told investigators “that his reason for starting the fire was because people were always breaking in and stealing his property.”

Charles Lacy Adkins is currently being held at Southern Regional Jail on a surety/cash bond of \$10,000.

White Sulphur Springs Man Facing Drug Charges

By by matthew young | WVDN SEP 09, 2021



A Greenbrier County man was arrested on the evening of Tuesday, Aug. 25 after being found to be in possession of narcotics. William Dwayne Bowling, 29, of White Sulphur Springs has been charged with possession with intent to deliver, as well as conspiracy to commit a felony.

At approximately 7:45 p.m. on the date in question, officers from the Lewisburg Police Department were notified of a drug-activity complaint. Reports indicated that a male suspect had allegedly been observed “injecting himself with what was believed to be narcotics. The incident was reported to have occurred in the parking lot of the Asylum restaurant on E. Randolph St. in Lewisburg.

The man was soon identified as William Dwayne Bowling, who, according to police, “is known to have a history

of illegal drug use.”

Upon their arrival, officers made contact with Bowling, and reported him as appearing “to be under the influence.”

According to the criminal complaint, Bowling admitted to being in possession of methamphetamine before giving his consent for the officers to perform a search of his vehicle. Throughout the course of their search, officers reportedly located “multiple straws, a set of scales and other paraphernalia consistent with illegal drug use [] and multiple baggies consistent with the sale of illegal drugs.”

William Dwayne Bowling is currently being held at Southern Regional Jail on a cash-only bail of \$25,000.