

WGTH ISSUES & PROGRAMS LIST

SECOND QUARTER 2020

APRIL – JUNE

IMPORTANT ELECTION INFORMATION

Virginia election laws have undergone several changes in the past few years with others to take effect on various dates within the next couple of years. It is difficult for directors of elections and election officers to keep up with current and future changes and which changes will be in effect for which elections and primaries. It is no wonder the general voting public experiences confusion regarding the laws and new procedures.

Additionally, COVID-19 has brought about new procedures for social distancing and sanitizing in order to protect both voters and election officials. Familiarizing the voters with as much election information ahead of time, should help voters realize their options for maximum safety procedures and help them to be aware of the upcoming primary and any changes they might experience.

Program: Prerecorded Interview

Dates/Times: May 6, 2020 @ 11:30 am and May 12, 2020 @ 7:06 pm

Duration: 29 minutes

Guest: Brian Earls, Director of Elections for Tazewell County

Many significant topics of interest to area voters in Virginia were discussed in an interview with Brian Earls, the Director of Elections for Tazewell County. For example, Brian announced that Governor of Virginia, Ralph Northam, changed the date for the upcoming Republican

Senatorial Primary from early June to June 23rd – as part of his Executive Order 56 – in an effort to give more time to allow safety measures to take effect and to plan for precautions necessary to protect voters and election officials. Furthermore, Brian announced the new dates for the deadline to register to vote in the primary and to request an absentee ballot to be mailed. These new dates correspond to the change in the date of the primary.

The purpose of the Republican Primary was discussed as it will determine who will run against the Democratic incumbent, Mark Warner, for the United States Senate. There had been very little promotion of the primary so that the candidates running for the Republican nomination were, relatively, unknown. Brian stated that the nominees included: Daniel M. Gade, Thomas A. Speciale II, and Alissa A. Baldwin. He, also, explained that there would not be a need for a Congressional primary, because the Republican incumbent, Congressman Morgan Griffith, was running unopposed.

Many additional topics were discussed, including:

- the new location of the Tazewell County General Registrar's Office (Brian's other title)
- current hours of operation due to COVID restrictions
- who needs to update their existing voter registration and why
- procedure for requesting an absentee ballot
- curbside voting is automatically available to those 65 or older
- online opportunities to find voting information...
votetazewellcounty.org and citizenportal
- those desiring to run for office in the town elections (November 3rd) were reminded the deadline is June 9th
- a reminder regarding Real ID's
- and with the change in Virginia voting laws, this primary will be the last time photo ID's will be required (The law changes July 1st.)

SMALL BUSINESSES MAY RECEIVE ASSISTANCE DURING COVID CRISIS AND BEYOND

Economic injury from the COVID pandemic has been widespread. There is no doubt that most businesses have suffered and, sadly, many are looking at the probability of permanent closure. Loss of businesses means loss of jobs and hardship for the individuals and economy of Tazewell County.

Dates/Times: May 1, 2020 @ 11:34 am and May 5, 2020 @ 7:05 pm

Duration: 13 minutes

Guest: Lori Stacy, Executive Director of the Tazewell County Chamber of Commerce

Lori Stacy, Executive Director of the Tazewell County Chamber of Commerce, announced the establishment of the Community Investment Partnership. “The Tazewell County Chamber of Commerce and Clinch Valley Community Action (CVCA) joined efforts to create the Community Investment Partnership in order to assist small businesses during the COVID-19 Crisis,” according to Lori. She highly commended Doug Sheets, Executive Director of CVCA, for his part in the cooperative effort. She, also, indicated that both the Chamber and CVCA planned to continue the partnership after the COVID-19 crisis ends. Lori stated, “The goal of the partnership is to help prevent the loss of any business in Tazewell County, to protect employment and to provide the resources needed to enrich our business community.” She gave application process information for any small business that had experienced economic injury due to the pandemic in hopes they could avoid incurring additional debt. Contact information was given for additional details and qualifications. Veteran small business owners and operators were encouraged to mentor those establishing new businesses, because everyone in the community benefits when businesses succeed.

CITIZENS ARE WELCOME TO PARTICIPATE IN COUNTY GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Transparency on the part of elected officials is crucial in properly managing finances and in making important decisions that affect the citizens, businesses, and other entities of a county. However, there are responsibilities on the part of those being represented, as well. Knowledge of what concerns are being addressed by a governing body and how tax monies are to be spent are just a couple of issues that should interest residents, business owners, and members of organizations within a county. Although elected officials are to represent their constituents, it would be difficult to be aware of all the repercussions that could take place based upon certain decisions. Sometimes, input from citizens that would be most affected could be extremely helpful.

Program: Prerecorded interview

Dates/Times: May 1, 2020 @ 11:47 am and May 4, 2020 @ 2:07 pm

Duration: 13 minutes 49 seconds

Guest: Travis Hackworth, Member of the Tazewell County Board of Supervisors from the Northwestern District

Travis Hackworth, member of the Tazewell County Board of Supervisors, approached WGTH and asked if he could report to the listeners regarding the Board of Supervisors upcoming meetings on a regular basis along with additional topics of interest. First of all, he felt as though transparency on the part of the Board is extremely important. Additionally, Travis wants the people of Tazewell County to be aware of the business of the county and how it will affect them. He is hopeful that his reports will encourage greater citizen participation.

In his first report, prior to the Tuesday, May 5, 2020, Tazewell County Board of Supervisors meeting, Travis gave specific information

about the regularly scheduled Board meeting dates and times. He explained that the meetings start at 4 p.m., but go into executive session at 4:15 p.m. in order to discuss sensitive issues and information that would be inappropriate to discuss with the public and the media at that time. The open session begins at 6 p.m.

Participation by those who reside or have businesses or other interests within Tazewell County is heartily sought by Travis and the other members of the Board. Based upon the request of the current Board members, agendas and minutes from as far back as 2011 are now available on the tazewellcountyva.org website. The agenda for the upcoming meeting will be posted prior to the meeting for the benefit of those interested in taking part. The COVID-19 mandate, ordered by Governor Northam, has restricted the number of people that can attend the meetings in person. However, there is no restriction upon the media and others can participate by telephone. Travis gave the details of how this works and what number to call.

The Coronavirus crisis, COVID-19, has been a major topic of discussion for the county. At this point, the number of positive cases was below ten in Tazewell County. Travis shared that the Board had adopted a slogan: “Spread Facts Not Fear.” He indicated that rumors were spreading that were not based on facts. The Board of Supervisors receives regular updates on cases in the county, including the number of people that tested positive, in what general location of the county those that tested positive live, if those with the virus had to be hospitalized, whether or not the cases are active, and where and how it is supposed the exposure originated. He could be called, if necessary, for fact-finding.

Travis, strongly, encouraged listeners to complete the 2020 Census online to be certain they are counted. He, emphatically, explained the need for everyone to be counted, because the census results will affect schools, VDOT, redistricting... and the list goes on... for ten years.

RECOGNITION OF RICHLANDS AREA

2020 HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS

Although everyone suffered from some COVID-related issues that disrupted lives and changed schedules, there were special groups of people that were more dramatically affected than others. High school seniors anticipating proms and traditional graduations would be among those that were not able to participate in those long-awaited and well-earned events. These precious victims of the pandemic, over which they had no control, were forced to miss out on traditional milestone celebrations.

Program: Live broadcast of the Richlands High School (and local private school) Senior Recognition Parade

Date/Time: May 29, 2020 @ 6:07pm Duration: 58 minutes

Announcers: Ron and Edythe Brown of WGTH

All Richlands High School seniors and those from local private schools had been invited by the schools' administrations to participate in a parade in their honor. Seniors could use any form of transportation they desired and drive themselves or have a driver. The parade began at Richlands High School where the teachers lined up six feet apart outside the school to wave and wish each student well. Parade observers were encouraged to make signs for their senior(s), and there had already been beautifully made photo posters – one for each senior – placed on street lights throughout the town.

WGTH had spoken with Mrs. Kim Ringstaff, the principal of Richlands High School, and offered to help with the acknowledgement of the 2020 seniors in any way possible. Broadcasting the 2020 Senior

Recognition Parade on May 29th and the official graduation set for July 25th were her two requests. In fact, WGTH's Charlene Pinkerton was instrumental in suggesting and organizing the parade. Announcements were made on-the-air about the upcoming parade and encouraging the participation of the greater Richlands community.

On May 29th, the 2020 Senior Recognition Parade took place starting from the Richlands High School at 6 p.m. WGTH did a live broadcast of the parade with Ron and Edythe Brown announcing each senior as they passed by in or on their mode of transportation. The seniors, actually, made two loops of the parade route... allowing a little more "savor time" on their part and more extensive recognition of each individual on-the-air.

TOURISM: IMPORTANT TO TAZEWELL COUNTY'S ECONOMY (WITH SPECIAL COVID-19 CONSIDERATIONS)

The mountains, valleys, rivers, lakes, streams, byways, and other captivating scenery that is characteristic of Tazewell County have made it a tourist's delight. Tazewell County is an important part of the "Heart of Appalachia" region when it comes to tourism and its impact on the local and regional economy. The tourism industry in Tazewell County has grown a lot over the past decade, but it had just taken off when the COVID-19 pandemic pressed its pause button.

Program: Prerecorded interview

Dates/Times: May 29, 2020 @ 11:31 am and June 1, 2020 @ 2:01 pm

Duration: 30 minutes

Guests: A. J. Robinson, Tazewell County's Director of Community Development and Tourism

Travis Hackworth, member of the Tazewell County Board of Supervisors, representing the Northwestern District

During her first interview on WGTH, A. J. Robinson, Director of Community Development and Tourism for Tazewell County, initially answered quite a few personal questions about her previous career experiences and how she came to Tazewell County. Travis Hackworth, Northwestern District Supervisor on the Tazewell County Board of Supervisors, bragged on the work that A. J. had done in order to promote county and regional tourism. She had helped set up improved websites and social media connections to get the word out about every aspect of the county... its assets and resources. Several websites, a Facebook page, phone numbers, and other important contact information were mentioned at the beginning and end of the interview.

Since COVID-19 restrictions were still in Phase One in Virginia when the interview was done, A. J. highlighted the Virginia Tourism Campaign in which Tazewell County was taking part: “We’ll Be Waiting for You.” She explained that the thought behind the campaign was, “When we’re open and when you are comfortable and we’re comfortable, we’ll be glad to have you.” She emphasized that, “Tourism has come to a pause, not a stop!” Already signs were indicating that Phase Two was rapidly approaching and area businesses and tourist spots were imagining what that would look like and gearing up for its implementation at their various locations.

Especially in view of the probability that the Coronavirus pandemic would cause many people to do “staycations” or smaller road trips, A. J. began to tout the many wonderful opportunities for adventure that are available in Tazewell County. A. J. shared that she was amazed that many residents of Tazewell County are unaware of the presence of a portion of the Appalachian Trail bordering the breathtaking Burkes Garden community... one of two sites considered by George Vanderbilt

who, ultimately, settled on Asheville, North Carolina. She identified some “must see” places there: Burkes Garden General Store, Mattie’s Place (store and bicycle rentals), and Burkes Garden Artisans Guild. There was a discussion of COVID-related changes to the popular “Varmint” Half Marathon and 5K that takes place, annually, in June at Burkes Garden. Normally more than 200 runners participate. This year, the 5K will be virtual and the half marathon will be staggered to allow for social distancing.

The “Back of the Dragon” is another uniquely marvelous outdoor opportunity that A. J. detailed. Route 16, that goes between the Town of Tazewell in Tazewell County and the Town of Marion in Smyth County, is a 32 mile ride with more than 400 curves. It is a nationally-acclaimed adventure for motorcycle and sports car enthusiasts. A recently completed \$1.8 million dollar investment went into the making of the new 5,000 square foot Back of the Dragon store that is located in the Town of Tazewell. The store features specialty coffee, yogurt and ice cream, a food truck, merchandise, open seating and a patio for the enjoyment and adventure-sharing of bikers and others. The site is marked by the presence of a huge dragon and sports a classic car and eclectic furniture.

ATV trails are another big attraction for tourists. A. J. talked about the Original Pocahontas OHV Trail (OP) that offers ATV enthusiasts a great trail for beginners and more experienced riders. Located in the rural Tazewell County towns of Pocahontas and Boissevain, the OP offers a more technical experience than most ATV trails and includes exciting areas of lush, dense forest. At least three other ATV/three-wheeler/Jeep trail locations in the county were highlighted along with some new, nearby lodging possibilities.

Kayaking on the Clinch River, from the historic Old Mill in Cedar Bluff on into Russell County, is one adventurous opportunity that is

gaining recognition as a popular tourist attraction. A. J. pointed out that the Clinch River is considered the most biologically diverse river after the Amazon.

A. J. shared about the development of the camping facilities at beautiful Cavitts Creek and Lake Jack Witten. There are cabins to rent, RV sites, and primitive tent camping sites... all at very reasonable rates.

According to A. J., the Department of Mines, Minerals, and Energy (DMME) has given a grant to reopen the Exhibition Mine in Pocahontas, restore the coal mining museum, and there will be a restaurant on location, as well. Travis mentioned that the Pocahontas Cemetery was a popular historical spot including people of many nationalities dating back to the early 1900's.

Travis interjected comments about plans for several new tourism-friendly technology usages that should, significantly, boost the promotional capabilities of area attractions, restaurants, and lodging. For example, there is a smart phone app that allows the tourist to start with a map and plan their trip by choosing all the places on the map (restaurants and attractions) that they would like to visit. Their trip is, then, planned out for them and, as they approach their places of choice, recorded audio information is generated to let the tourist know the location that is coming up and important facts about that location. A. J. explained that, since the COVID pandemic, it was helpful to have put Tazewell County's tourism brochures online. Additionally, they are in the process of putting kiosk-style screens in area motels and other strategic locations that would include tourism attractions along with local advertising and marketing information.

A. J. pointed out that, with the decline of coal mining and related industries that dominated the economy in Tazewell County and the entire region for almost a century, tourism has become significant in the Heart of Appalachia region. Tourism has grown 200% over the last three

to four years, according to Travis. A. J. admits that tourism will not be the saving grace of the economy, but “it is a booster to bring economic development back into our communities.” Furthermore, she agrees that tourism jobs do not pay as much as many other jobs, “but a tourism job is something that will never be taken overseas.”

One of the benefits that A. J. and Travis have seen from the COVID situation is that it has proven how well people in many jobs are able to work remotely from anywhere in the world. They ask, “Who wouldn’t want to live in a place as beautiful as Tazewell County with all the recreational opportunities?” They have already met some folks with high level salaries who have moved to Tazewell County because of its many attractive features. They are hoping the tourism upgrades will help draw more people with higher incomes to live here. Regarding that desire, Travis added that A. J. and the Board of Supervisors are working diligently to bring broadband to Tazewell County. He stated that it is one of their top priorities.

COVID-19 RELATED INFORMATION AND ENCOURAGEMENT

As the world has had to learn to make adjustments physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually, to a COVID-19 pandemic life, many individuals and families have suffered greatly while others have been able to enjoy a silver-lining to their personal situations. Contracting the virus or losing a friend or relative to the virus would be extremely difficult. The loss of a job, the closure of a family business, the inability to be with loved ones in the hospital or nursing home... are all examples of some of the worst case scenarios experienced during the crisis. Others have dealt with less dramatic setbacks, such as, adjusting to a new normal of homeschooling. Regardless of the degree of difficulty, most situations have proven easier to navigate with a little advice and encouragement.

Program: Afternoon drive ideas

April 7, 2020 @ 2:24 pm – 3 minutes: Edythe shared some fun and easy ideas for playing with small children. For example, hide Easter eggs filled with puzzle pieces that could include a timed competition for older children to see who could find the eggs and put their puzzle pieces together fastest. Create a sidewalk chalk obstacle course with running, skipping, hopping, spinning, and zigzagging. Have a stuffed animal scavenger hunt.

Program: The Kevin and Taylor Show (syndicated, prerecorded) featuring Kevin Avery and Taylor Scott

Examples:

April 7, 2020 @ 3:21 pm – 90 seconds: Taylor bragged on a college student, Ashley Lawrence, who had developed a “mask” with a window so that those who are deaf or hard of hearing are still able to read lips.

April 7, 2020 @ 3:29 pm – 55 seconds: Taylor shared some interesting homeschooling tips that she had heard. Dedicate a spot in the house for a special study spot... even a dog bed or a bathtub. “UNGLUE” cuts off other phone apps. FaceTiming with friends at lunchtime can be a helpful and positive break. Make sure there are fun recesses scheduled.

April 10, 2020 @ 5:31 pm – 3 minutes 24 seconds

@ 5:51 pm – 56 seconds, and

@ 5:55 pm – 4 minutes 25 seconds

Kevin and Taylor interviewed pastor and Christian author and speaker, Max Lucado, regarding fear and anxiety. He has studied these topics and written several books on how to overcome fear and anxiety. He talked about maintaining one’s spiritual health. Max, also, prayed for healthcare workers.

April 21, 2020 @ 3:25 pm – 1 minute: Taylor gave some hints (from a dietary expert) to avoid putting on “pandemic pounds,” “COVID-15,” or “Corona-15.” – Get plenty of sleep. – Eat regular meals. – Drink lots of water. It acts as an appetite suppressant, helps to burn calories, and keeps you from drinking other – less healthy – drinks.

April 21, 2020 @ 3:47 pm – 32 seconds: Taylor talked about some benefits from COVID isolation: Families were enjoying spending more time together. Kids were becoming more sensitive to the needs of others. Most people were way more thankful for the little things in life. Parents were more appreciative of teachers.

April 21, 2020 @ 3:51 pm – 1 minute 48 seconds: Taylor talked about the importance of showing concern for others by writing them notes or letters to mark anniversaries of losses they have endured.

May 26, 2020 @ 4:48 pm – 4 minutes 20 seconds

@ 4:57 pm – 3 minutes 46 seconds

Kevin and Taylor interviewed Louie Giglio, Christian author, speaker, and evangelist. He was offering his seven day email devotional – at no charge – that helps people deal with anxiety. He said it was “gritty” and “practical.” Louie talked about all the COVID-related nervous breakdowns and associated physical symptoms. “Anxiety and depression are real,” he contended. He shared some Scriptures that demonstrated that we need to show concern, but not worry. Living day-by-day instead of worrying about the future or the past is very helpful. Jesus is enough! That is the belief we must have and share with others to experience true peace. In these difficult times, we need to be a lighthouse to the world... to grow stronger... to deepen our faith. He stated, “If we don’t come out looking more like Jesus after this, as the Church and individuals, it will be a shame.”

Many similar helpful tidbits have been aired throughout the quarter.

