

Issues & Needs Reports



1st Quarter 2014

WVVA-TV
Bluefield, WV
Quarterly Listing of Problems and Needs

1. **BUSINESS:** Need for jobs; tourism; industry; downtown revitalization; compensation; availability of liability insurance; more regional cooperation.
2. **PUBLIC SAFETY, HEALTH AND WELFARE:** Strengthening of family unit, support for single parent families; child abuse; spouse abuse; sexual abuse; religion; need for resources for elderly; transportation and housing for poor and elderly; more problems for the elderly; needs for disadvantaged; nurses, doctors, and dentists; problems of alcohol and drug abuse; racial problems; lack of opportunities for blacks; charities.
3. **EDUCATION:** Need for upgrading of system and high educational standards; more money and support of system; education for non-traditional students; post-graduate educational opportunities; retaining and acquisition of new job skills; adaptation to high technology; more parental involvement.
4. **ORGANIZATIONS OF AND FOR YOUTH:** Problems of juvenile delinquency; lack of activities; drug and alcohol abuse; need for more jobs; teenage pregnancy; letter teen center; better communications and awareness of services available.
5. **RECREATION:** Need for more and improved facilities; more cultural programs. Community activities, more sports programs, playgrounds, etc.
6. **ELDERLY:** Services for elderly; seniors living with dignity; senior activities and facilities; transportation and housing for poor and elderly; senior nutrition.
7. **LABOR:** Lack of job opportunities; unemployment rate in WV; more upward mobility in jobs; job training.
8. **GOVERNMENT:** Need for adequate housing for poor and elderly; strong community leadership; community pride; increase/decrease population; more blacks in political community; long range community planning; community clean-ups; better enforcement of minimum housing codes; city-wide effort alcohol and drug abuse.
9. **ENVIRONMENT:** Problems of hazardous waste; weapons proliferation; nuclear energy; soil erosion; flooding; need for preservation of environment; conservation and recycling; pollution control.
10. **TRANSPORTATION:** Need for better highways, including interstate, rail services, maintaining air service, retain bus routes, city street repairs.

Locally Produced Programming



Station WVVA-TV programs to the ascertained problems and needs through a variety of programming vehicles. Being heavily community-oriented and interested in community problems and issues, the licensee devotes a very considerable amount of its news time to the coverage of significant problems, needs and issues facing the community. WVVA-TV has produced and broadcast the following programming material in response to the problems and needs of our viewing area.

IN FOCUS

Sunday 9:00-9:30 am (30 minutes)
If no network programming, repeat 12:00-12:30 pm (30 minutes)

In Focus is a public affairs program of WVVA TELEVISION, INC. that airs twice weekly. The first telecast is on Sunday, 9:00 am, with a repeat the same Sunday at noon (if no network programming.) This program provides discussion of local, state and national issues affecting our audience.

1/5/14

Guest: Corey Brooks

Moderator: Greg Carter

Subject: "My Band Spoken For formerly the Corey Brooks Band New Record deal Transition from Country Christian to Contemporary Christian."

1/12/14

Guest: Mayor Tom Cole

Moderator: Greg Carter

Subject: "The economy and loss of jobs due to the decline in the demand for coal."

1/19/14

Guest: Jason Cason & John Ball

Moderator: Greg Carter

Subject: Young Life. "High school students are asking life's big questions of Identity and purpose and there are not adults that will lead them to answer life's big questions."

2/5/14

Guest: Maurice Gravely, Amber Griffith, Jaelin Carpenter

Moderator: Greg Carter

Subject: Sparks

2/26/14

Guest: Kayla Rife

Moderator: Greg Carter
Subject: Lack of affordable Health Coverage

3/5/14

Guest: Laura Lilly

Moderator: Greg Carter

Subject: “Drugs, Economy, Lack of jobs, poor education (not enough advanced classes), \$ for elderly (not enough), state funds not distributed appropriately, not enough youth programs-to prevent issues as they get older.”

3/12/14

Guest: Sandra Lima Argo

Moderator: Greg Carter

Subject: Liaison America. “Education-to promote what schools do to enhance the learning opportunities for kids.”

3/19/14

Guest: Casey Palmer

Moderator: Greg Carter

Subject: New Opportunity School for Women. “I think the most important issues facing this community are drug abuse and addiction. I also think job opportunities are limited which causes a number of other issues for the community.”

NEWSCHANNEL 6

Monday – Friday 5:30-7:00 am (90 minutes)

Monday – Friday 5:00-5:30 pm (30 minutes)

Monday – Friday 6:00 - 6:30 pm (30 minutes)

Monday – Friday 11:00-11:30 pm (30 minutes)

Saturday – Sunday 11:00 - 11:30 pm (30 minutes)

WVVA News at 6 provides the most up-to-date information in the two Virginias with periodic in-depth background stories that deal with the problems and important issues of the communities we serve. Detail includes date telecast, length of in-depth story, number of specific problem or need, and topic. In most cases, the story was aired on both the 6:00 and 11:00 pm newscasts.

1/1/2014

(2)

SMOOT (WVVA)- Smoot Volunteer Firefighters are asking for help from surrounding fire departments to get new equipment for their fire trucks.

As of right now they have one fully equip truck with all of the nozzles and hoses mandated by the state but, the other trucks need a few more.

With a hefty price tag of close to twenty thousand dollars worth of equipment they say any help will be appreciated.

If any firefighters and their departments want to donate nozzles or hoses or if you would like to donate money towards buying new ones you can contact Smoot Volunteer Firefighters at (304) 392-9895.

1/2/14

(2)

RALEIGH (WVVA) – A garage goes up in flames early Thursday morning on Mount View Road in Cool Ridge.

Dispatchers received the call around 2:30.

Ghent, Beaver and Cool City were all on scene.

Ghent E-M-S was also dispatched even though no injuries have been reported.

The cause of the fire is unknown at this time.

1/3/14

(2)

GREENBRIER COUNTY (WVVA)- When a winter storm hits the two Virginia's, emergency service workers are on call 24/7 helping those in need.

While commuters still have to be on the road braving the elements they never know what's ahead of them. Accidents can occur at any time, with small cars, SUVs and tractor trailers.

That's when emergency workers step in responding in a moments time. For them the ice and snow is just as difficult to move and work in, if not harder.

Standing out in the frigid temperatures can take a toll on these men and women but, they say it's all worth it.

1/4/14

(2)

FAYETTE COUNTY (WVVA) -- Officials report that a fake Publisher's Clearing House agent has been calling people in the Fayette County area.

According to the Fayette County Sheriff's Department the caller tells their potential victim that they've won a \$1.5 million prize, and in order to claim it, they have to purchase a \$400 pre-paid card.

One of the phone numbers they have called from is (876) 524-6656.

Officials urge you, do not send any money or divulge any financial information to the individual.

1/9/14

(2)

MERCER (WVVA) – Crews battle a fully involved structure fire early Thursday morning on Freedom Road in Montcalm.

Dispatchers say they received the call of the house fire from a neighbor just a little after two. Dispatchers could not confirm if anyone was home at the time.

Four different fire departments battled the blaze while AEP assisted with low power lines.

The cause of the fire is unknown at this time.

1/10/14

(2)

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) -- Schools and restaurants closed, stores sold out of bottled water, and legislators canceled business after a chemical spill in the Elk River in Charleston affected about 300,000 people and shut down much of the city and surrounding counties.

The federal government joined the state Friday in declaring a disaster. In requesting the federal declaration, state officials said about 100,000 customers, or roughly 300,000 people total, were affected.

After the Thursday spill from Freedom Industries hit the river, Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin ordered customers of West Virginia American Water not to drink, bathe, cook or wash clothes with tap water.

The state National Guard planned to distribute bottled water to emergency services agencies in the nine affected counties.

The cause of the spill remains unclear.

1/10/14

(2)

CHARLESTON (WVVA) - Freedom Industries has issued its first statement on the chemical spill that occurred at its plant along the Elk River near Charleston. Below is the full statement:

"Since the discovery of the leak, safety for residents in Kanawha and surrounding counties has been Freedom Industries' first priority. We have been working with local and federal regulatory, safety and environmental entities, including the DEP, Coast Guard, Army Corp of Engineers and Homeland Security, and are following all necessary steps to fix the issue. Our team has been working around the clock since the discovery to contain the leak to prevent further contamination. At this point, Freedom Industries is still working to determine the amount of 4-methylcyclohexanemethanol, or Crude MCHM, a chemical used in processing coal, that has been released, as the first priority was safety, containment and cleanup. Freedom Industries is in the process of setting up an Incident Command Center on site. As more factual information is made available, we will keep you updated."

1/10/14

(2)

CHARLESTON (WVVA) - U.S. Attorney Booth Goodwin stated Friday that his office has opened an investigation into the chemical spill that has threatened the water supply of hundreds of thousands of West Virginia residents. Goodwin issued the following statement: "Yesterday's release of a potentially dangerous chemical into our water supply has put hundreds of thousands of West Virginians at risk, severely disrupted our region's economy, and upended people's daily lives. My office and other federal law enforcement authorities have opened an investigation into the circumstances surrounding the release. We will determine what caused it and take whatever action is appropriate based on the evidence we uncover."

1/11/14

(2)

PHILADELPHIA (NEWS RELEASE) -- The Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), through its regional office in Philadelphia, Pa. and on site in Charleston, W.Va., continues to work in close coordination with the West Virginia Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management to support state and local efforts to ensure public health and safety, in response to emergency conditions resulting from a chemical spill in Charleston on Thursday.

At the request of the state, FEMA is continuing to provide supplies to a regional staging area in Charleston. As of Saturday, FEMA has delivered approximately 1 million liters of water from its distribution centers in Cumberland and Frederick, Maryland, to the area for use by the state. FEMA will continue to deliver supplies to the state for distribution, as needed and request.

[Click here for a photo of water arriving at the staging area Friday night via Twitter.](#)

Friday, President Barack Obama signed an emergency declaration for federal disaster assistance to West Virginia to supplement state and local response efforts. Direct federal assistance is currently available for Boone, Cabell, Clay, Jackson, Kanawha, Lincoln, Logan, Putnam and Roane counties to alleviate the impacts of the emergency. Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh Johnson also spoke with West Virginia Governor Earl Ray Tomblin on Friday to convey concern for those impacted by this incident and to make sure there were no unmet needs as the response continues.

In support of state and local response efforts, a FEMA liaison, an Incident Management Assistance Team and a Mobile Emergency Response team are on site in Charleston to help coordinate assistance to the state as needed. In addition,

FEMA's Regional Response Coordination Center in Philadelphia is activated to support coordination efforts and assist in mobilizing resources.

"FEMA is in Charleston, working with the State of West Virginia to help meet the needs of impacted residents," said Federal Coordinating Officer Michael Lapinski. "I encourage those affected to continue to listen to State and Local officials for updated information, including where they can get drinking water."

Residents can follow The West Virginia Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management at www.twitter.com/wvdhsem and www.facebook.com/WVDHSEM.

When emergencies occur, the first responders are state, local and tribal emergency and public works personnel, volunteers, humanitarian organizations, and numerous private interest groups who provide emergency assistance required to protect the public's health and safety and to meet the immediate needs of survivors.

1/13/14

(2)

CHARLESTON (WVVA) -- A press conference wraps up early Sunday evening concerning questions about when the water will be deemed usable.

Officials announced school is canceled Monday for Boone, Kanawha, Lincoln and Putnam counties. All state employees are expected to report to work.

Systems will be flushed zone by zone once the water is said to be safe. American Water customers can check through an interactive map online or by phone, after an announcement is made that the water is coming back on.

As of Sunday, samples had been tested with lower levels of the chemical.

"Over the past 24 hours sampling and testing has provided confirmation for a 24 hour period that we have at the water treatment facility a consistent number of below one part per million at the outflow of the water treatment facility," says Adjutant General James Hoyer.

"We also are continuing our process for food service to allow restaurants and some establishments to reopen with approval from their local county health departments," says Karen Bowling, DHHR Secretary. "In addition we have looked at the possibility of having a similar process for daycare centers, again with approval of the county health departments and that information would be available on the county health department's website."

There is still no definite answer when the water will be usable.

"I ask all West Virginians to continue to be patient as we work to safely restore service to the affected areas," says Governor Earl Ray Tomblin, (D) West Virginia.

1/14/14

(2, 8)

Charleston, W.Va. - Secretary of State Natalie E. Tennant is calling for answers and accountability for West Virginians as the process begins for lifting the water ban impacting nine counties across the state. Tennant has been visiting with folks and helping hand out water since Friday at distribution centers including at Riverside High School and the Charleston Fire Station on the city's East End.

"Our number one priority is the health and safety of West Virginians, and we will continue to monitor the situation closely as the water ban begins to be lifted," Tennant said. "I join all West Virginians in thanking our National Guard, firefighters, emergency workers, doctors, nurses and everyone who pitched in to help their fellow West Virginians in need. When the worst happens, West Virginians are at our best. I saw that first hand talking with families out on the water lines.

"Now it's time for answers. There are very serious questions surrounding how this leak was allowed to happen, why it was not reported immediately, and what needs to be done to ensure this never happens again. I applaud the US Attorney for launching an investigation, and my office stands ready to help West Virginians get the answers and accountability they deserve."

Secretary Tennant is also working to secure support for businesses forced to close by the water crisis and their workers who missed shifts.

1/16/14

(2)

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – A total of six individuals have been sentenced for their roles in a major false billing scheme involving sourcing agents at former Massey Legacy Mines ("Massey") -- now Alpha Natural Resources ("Alpha") -- and certain companies that provided supplies, equipment, and services to Alpha, U.S. Attorney Booth Goodwin announced today. Donald Bryan Steele, the former owner of M&S Hydraulics, a major Alpha supplier, was sentenced today to 18 months in federal prison. Steele, 43, of Barboursville, previously pleaded guilty to wire fraud and aiding and abetting in connection with the fraud scheme.

When approached by law enforcement in February 2013, Steele admitted to investigators that during the scheme, he illegally provided cash and other things of value to former Massey sourcing agents Joey R. Phalin, Edward Ellis Mullins, and Nicholas R. Coleman, in exchange for bogus invoices for payment that M&S Hydraulics knowingly had not provided. Between at least July 2007 through 2012, Steele falsely billed, through the sourcing agents, approximately \$1.3 million for goods and services that were not provided.

The sourcing agents, who were generally responsible for ordering goods and services for mining operations from Alpha suppliers, participated in the illegal scheme to obtain goods for their own personal benefit. The sourcing agents hid numerous illegal transactions by creating false invoices.

Phalin, 36, of Crab Orchard, W.Va., was sentenced today to five years' probation, the first three months of which are to be served on home confinement. Mullins, 41, of Peytona, W.Va., was sentenced yesterday to five years' probation, the first ten months of which are to be served on home confinement. Coleman, 29, of Lester, W.Va. was sentenced yesterday to five years' probation for his role in the scheme.

Through his cooperation, Steele identified other sourcing agents involved in the scheme. Last week, former sourcing agent Ricky R. Smith, of 49, Glen Daniels, was sentenced to 1 ½ years in federal prison. James Rodger Long II, 34, of Beckley, also a sourcing agent, was sentenced to 1 ½ years in prison.

Harold Wayne Brown, II, a former Alpha underground maintenance chief, previously pleaded guilty to making a false statement to federal authorities regarding benefits he had received from the false billing scheme. Brown, II, 41, of Madison, W.Va. is scheduled to be sentenced on Jan. 21, 2014.

The investigation was conducted by the FBI and the West Virginia State Police with cooperation from Alpha Natural Resource's internal security team. Assistant United States Attorney Thomas Ryan is in charge of the prosecutions.

In June 2011, Alpha Natural Resources finalized the purchase of Massey, including the mining divisions located along WV Route 3 in Boone and Raleigh counties.

1/17/14

(2)

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) -- The Company blamed for a chemical spill that left 300,000 West Virginians without safe drinking water has filed for bankruptcy.

Freedom Industries Inc. filed for bankruptcy Friday with the U.S. Bankruptcy Court in the Southern District of West Virginia.

Company president Gary Southern signed the paperwork.

The water was tainted after a chemical used to clean coal leaked from a storage tank and then a containment area at a facility owned by Freedom Industries.

The bankruptcy document says the leaky storage tank appears to have been pierced through its base by some sort of object.

It also says a current theory for the hole is that a local water line that broke near the Charleston plant could have made the ground beneath the storage tank freeze in the cold days before Thursday's spill.

1/17/14

(2, 3)

WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS, W. Va (WVVA)-- West Virginia educators are celebrating a program that brings farm-fresh food into schools statewide.

Friday, students and educational leaders including Gayle Manchin attended the "Farm to School" showcase at The Greenbrier resort.

Through the program, schools in 38 counties are buying local produce-- some of which is grown by students-- and serving it at lunch.

This year, more than \$470,000 worth of food has been purchased locally through the program.

Leaders say it's all about supporting local economies while finding healthy ways to feed kids.

"When we see student growers who have sold to their school, and they're out there saying 'I grew this sweet corn,' then more students eat lunch because they want to taste that product. And taste that difference," said Bekki Leigh, coordinator at the Office of Child Nutrition through the WV Department of Education. "And they are seeing a difference in the product. So that's what we're about-- feeding kids."

Orin Jackson, a student producer at a school in Cabell County, agrees.

"It is I guess you can say a heartwarming feeling seeing it's neat that people are benefiting from something I've done," he said.

65 students like Jackson are participating in the program, selling their produce to schools

1/19/14

(8)

RICHMOND (WVVA) -- In the blink of an eye, Virginia is becoming a key factor in the nationwide fight to grant gay men and women the right to marry.

Traditionally conservative Utah and Oklahoma recently made court gains on the issue, so gay rights advocates in Virginia are motivated by this news and the new mood ushered in by a Democratic sweep at the top of the ticket.

Virginia's gay marriage ban spark nationwide interest because of the state's role in the 1967 landmark Supreme Court case ruling laws against interracial marriage unconstitutional

1/20/14

(2)

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) -- The percentage of people arrested after being denied permission to buy firearms at Virginia gun shows has increased over the last two years.

The Richmond Times-Dispatch reports that 10.6 percent of the people who were denied permission to buy guns in 2011 were charged with an offense related to being someone legally prohibited from possessing a firearm. That increased to 12.4 percent in 2012 and to 27 percent last year.

Thomas Baker is a criminologist at Virginia Commonwealth University. He says that while the upward trend is a positive sign, it's important to note that those who weren't arrested after failing a background check could simply go to a private seller at a show and buy a gun. Existing law requires only federally licensed dealers to run background checks.

1/20/14

(2)

OAK HILL (WVVA) - A Raleigh County man is accused of stealing copper from a residence in Oak Hill.

An officer spotted Douglas Mills walking down East Main Street Monday morning carrying chunks of copper.

Police say Mills confessed to taking the copper when questioned by the officer. A juvenile was also involved.

Mills is charged petit larceny and destruction of property.

He is being held at Southern Regional Jail.

1/20/14

(2)

WELCH (NEWS RELEASE) – As part of National Mentoring Month, Catholic Charities West Virginia (CCWVa) is partnering with Reconnecting McDowell, West Virginia University Extension and McDowell County Public Schools to launch the McDowell County Mentoring Program in January.

CCWVa is currently working on mentor/mentee matching and planning school-based mentoring sessions. On Jan. 23, at Mount View Middle School in Welch, the mentees will have the opportunity to get to know each other and receive an overview of the program. "The program is ready to launch," says Carol Bailey, CCWVa Interim Southern Region director, "but we need more mentors. This is a great way for conscientious community members to improve the lives of one and improve the community." National Mentoring Month focuses on increasing awareness of the effectiveness and need for mentors nationwide. Across the U.S., mentoring programs will be celebrating National Mentoring Month in various ways.

CCWVa is fortunate to offer the mentoring program to the Southern Region through the collaboration of national, state and local organizations. The McDowell County Mentoring Program is made possible through a sub grant with Catholic Charities USA from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Additional funding and support is provided by the Reconnecting McDowell subcommittee members, including Reconnecting McDowell, McDowell County Schools and the Search Institute.

CCWVa and the Search Institute analyzed several factors to determine the effectiveness of the program during the implementation phase of the research. These factors will be measured periodically throughout the duration of the mentoring program on each participant. The mentoring program has been designed to assist youth with improving their developmental assets, decrease truancy, increase school achievement and decrease anti-social behavior.

To become a mentor or find out more information about the program, contact CCWVa Southern Region at (304) 425-4306, cbailey@ccwva.org or Like it on Facebook – Catholic Charities West Virginia Southern Region.

1/21/14

(8)

PRINCETON, W. Va (WVVA)-- Senator Joe Manchin visited our region Tuesday.

It was part of a tour of Mercer County, where he held public town hall meetings and met with community organizations.

The day's events were a chance for the Senator to connect with West Virginians and gauge their opinions about important issues affecting our nation.

He says he will keep their ideas in mind when he heads back to Washington.

Senator Manchin also discussed the "Chemical Safety and Drinking Water Protection Act of 2014"-- a new bill he is co-sponsoring to increase regulation of above-ground chemical storage tanks like the one that recently leaked in Charleston.

"Just because they're not labeled as hazardous or toxic or lethal, [are they] out of sight out of mind?" he said to the crowd gathered at the town hall meeting. "That's how we've been operating. But now, we're putting basic guidelines on the federal end of it, that every state has to go out and do. And it gives them the authority and the backing to go out and do what needs to be done."

This bill establishes state programs to oversee, and inspect, chemical facilities that threaten drinking water.

It also sets standards and inspection requirements, ensures information-sharing between water companies and chemical facilities, and allows drinking water systems to act in emergency situations to stop immediate threats.

Senator Manchin tells WVVA he plans to introduce that legislation next Monday.

1/22/14

(8)

Charleston, W.Va. – With the revelation that another chemical tainted the drinking water for 300,000 people in nine counties, Secretary of State Natalie E. Tennant renewed her calls for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to post online the test results that explain to West Virginians how the water is determined to be safe.

A product called PPH was mixed with the Crude MCHM that leaked from a ruptured storage tank and into the drinking water supply earlier this month.

"It is very disturbing that we are just now finding out about this new chemical almost two weeks after the leak," Secretary Tennant said. "And with this new information West Virginians are right to raise even more questions about the safety of their drinking water. They need to have that reassurance and a good first step is for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to post online all of the tests done on our water, the methodology, and the results. West Virginians demand and deserve clear, concise, and easy to understand answers to these very serious questions. We must have confidence that the water coming out of our faucets is not going to make our families sick."

Secretary Tennant has sent a letter to CDC Director Dr. Thomas Frieden, asking the agency to set up the website quickly.

She has also supported House Bill 4175, the West Virginia Small Business Emergency Act, which is now pending before a State Senate Committee. The bill would allow for the drafting of an emergency rule that would provide assistance to small businesses affected by States of Emergency

1/22/14

(2)

Hinton -

Many across the Two Virginias depend on propane to heat their homes. Unfortunately, this has been an unusually cold winter.

In the last few weeks temperatures have dipped to the single digits and in some cases below zero and that has meant a propane shortage.

Michael Gore of Hinton heats his home with propane. With a shortage of the resource, he says his tank is only a quarter full.

"I was shocked because propane readily available and it's abundant, at least I thought. Everybody is pushing propane, now here's a shortage and it keeps everyone on edge," says Gore.

"We don't necessarily need to keep it quite as warm as we have. We are in the house with a t-shirt but with plenty of sweat shirts in the house so we can tone it down a little bit...

Greg Rogers, President of R.T. Rogers Oil Company in Hinton says getting propane these days has been a challenge because it's a difficult time in the industry.

"It's limited in that you can't have all you want right now so there is some limitations involved," says Rogers.

He blames the cold weather for the shortage that has increased both demand and the price. In some cases he says customers are paying nearly \$500 more for propane this winter versus last winter, so they are asking customers to buy only what they need for now.

"I would say concern not a worry, but a concern just because you want to be sure we take care of our community and take care of our customers because we have limitations and concerned how to manage those limitations," says Rogers.

Rogers estimates the propane shortage should be over in between two to four weeks.

1/22/14

(2)

BLUEFIELD, W. Va (WVVA) -- People across the Two Virginias are concerned about legislation they say could move more American jobs overseas.

Several Communications Workers of America members joined Congressman Nick Rahall in Bluefield Wednesday to rally against the fast-track of the "Trans-Pacific Partnership," or as it's abbreviated, TPP.

The TPP is a proposed trade agreement between the US and several nations, including Mexico, Peru, Singapore, and Vietnam.

It's still under negotiation, but fast-tracking it would mean the president would be authorized to negotiate and enter into agreements with other nations without congressional approval.

"This is not a very transparent manner in which to undertake such important treaties with our trading partners. I think it ought to be taken before congress, it ought to be a transparent process," said Rahall.

The bill is currently held up in administration, but Rahall believes as soon as supporters get enough votes, it will be brought before Congress.

He says he's prepared to vote "no" to save American jobs.

1/26/14

(2)

BLUEFIELD, Va. (WVVA) -- Almost 1,500 pounds of copper has been stolen from a local business. Three suspects are behind bars for the crime.

Jerry Lucas, 33, of Bossevain, Virginia and Jerry Mitchem, 27, of Anawalt, West Virginia have admitted to breaking into Blizzards Inc. and E.I.S. to steal copper.

They resold it for more than \$4,000. The two are being charged with breaking and entering, grand larceny, conspiracy to commit breaking and entering and conspiracy to commit grand larceny.

A third man, James Lowmark, 23 of Princeton is also being charged with conspiracy to commit breaking and entering and conspiracy to commit grand larceny.

More charges are still pending. The three are being held in Southwest Regional Jail.

1/26/14

(2)

FAYETTEVILLE (WVVA) -- A former federal corrections officer has pleaded guilty distributing pills.

James Butcher, 42, of Fayetteville entered the plea in front of Judge Paul Blake Monday. He is accused of distributing pills across Fayette County, mainly in the Fayetteville and Oak Hill areas, and also in Clay County.

Butcher was a correctional officer at the Federal Bureau of Prisons in Beckley at the time of the offenses.

His girlfriend, Misty Irene Goodwin, is facing the same charges.

According to the Fayette County Sheriff's Department, the two conspired to purchase large amounts of roxycodone in Clay County and then resell them in Fayette County.

[View WVVA.com's original report on Butcher's arrest](#)

1/27/14

(2)

Bluefield, W.Va. (WVVA)--Police need your help identifying a man and woman wanted for passing counterfeit \$100 bills.

A total of six \$100 bills were used at the Kmart store in Bluefield, W.Va.

The female suspect used three bills to purchase a video baby monitor and some video game equipment. The male sought in this case used three bills to purchase several video games. He was seen wearing a camouflage outfit.

Police tell us the counterfeit cash passed the marker test but if you look closely, you can tell it's not real.

If you have any information on the identity of the suspects, contact the Bluefield Police Department at 304-327-6101.

1/27/14

(2)

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) -- West Virginia regulators say a company has increased by 25 percent its estimate of a chemical mixture that leaked from a storage tank.

The Department of Environmental Protection says Freedom Industries now says about 10,000 gallons leaked from the Charleston plant, up from an initial estimate of about 7,500 gallons.

The DEP says it's still unknown how much of the chemical mixture spilled into the Elk River and forced 300,000 residents in nine counties to stop using their tap water for up to a week except for flushing toilets.

After the initial leak, Freedom Industries later said a second chemical was mixed with the coal-cleaning agent that spilled on Jan. 9.

On Saturday, Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin ordered the company to remove all 17 of its above-ground storage tanks

1/27/14

(2)

Bluefield, W.Va. (WVVA)--The brutally cold temperatures we've experienced a lot of days this month is forcing more people to seek help.

Craig Hammond with the Bluefield Union Mission says the number of families seeking assistance to stay warm has doubled. Volunteers are giving out blankets, hats, gloves, and warm-up kits to those in need.

They also have kerosene vouchers for qualifying families but the Mission is out of electric space heaters.

Hammond says that the low temperatures combined with poorly insulated homes make it difficult for people to stay warm.

1/28/14

(2)

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) -- Appalachian Power is asking its customers in Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia to conserve electricity during the latest cold snap.

The utility says in a news release that PJM Interconnection has issued a call for voluntary conservation on Tuesday because of expected high demand. PJM operates the electricity grid for 13 states and the District of Columbia.

Appalachian Power vice president of distribution operations Phil Wright voluntarily conserving electricity lessens the likelihood of service interruptions.

Wright says Appalachian Power is confident that it will have sufficient capacity to serve all its customers.

Conservation measures include lowering the thermostat to the lowest comfortable level, and postponing using stoves, clothes dryers and other major appliances until mid-day or after 9 p.m.

1/28/14

(8)

BLUEFIELD, Va. – News Release from the U.S. Department of Labor: U.S. Magistrate Judge Pamela Meade Sargent ordered the garnishment of an additional \$5,002 in liquidated damages from the Tazewell County accounting firm of Raymond A. Froy Jr., CPA, P.C., and its president, Raymond A. Froy Jr., after ruling that the defendants failed to meet the terms of a consent judgment with the U.S. Department of Labor.

"Employers face legal consequences when they fail to comply with the terms of consent judgments," said John DuMont, director of the division's Pittsburgh District Office, which conducted the investigation. "Compliance with labor laws matters, and we will use all enforcement tools available to ensure employers abide by the law."

Under the terms of the Jan. 11, 2013, consent judgment, which resolved a lawsuit filed by the department that alleged violations of the Fair Labor Standards Act, the accounting firm agreed to pay \$17,003 in back wages and liquidated damages to six employees by Feb. 1, 2013. The consent judgment stipulated that, if the terms of the agreement were not met, the firm would become liable for an additional \$5,002 in liquidated damages. Because the employer chose not to pay the full amount he agreed to pay, the judge ordered the garnishment of the additional liquidated damages and remaining unpaid back wages, bringing the total to \$22,005.

Investigators from the division's Pittsburgh District Office found the firm violated the FLSA's minimum wage, overtime and record-keeping provisions by paying tax preparers straight-time wages for all hours worked, rather than time and one-half their regular rates of pay for hours worked beyond 40 per week. The employer also failed to pay two employees at least the federal minimum wage; did not record dates of birth for minor employees; and failed to make, keep and preserve adequate and accurate records of employees' wages, hours and other conditions of employment.

On Aug. 27, 2013, the court issued a Writ of Continuing Garnishment to National Bank directed at the accounts of the defendants for the amount that remained due to the department under the consent agreement. Froy filed an Objection to Garnishment on Sept. 15, which the judge overruled on Nov. 25. The judge ruled that the defendants did not present any claim or evidence that the property held by National Bank was subject to a valid claim of exemption, or that the department failed to comply with the statutory requirements for the issuance of the Writ of Garnishment. The court found that there was no good cause for setting aside the terms of the consent judgment.

The FLSA requires that covered, nonexempt employees be paid at least the federal minimum wage of \$7.25 for all hours worked, plus time and one-half their regular rates, including commissions, bonuses and incentive pay, for hours worked beyond 40 per week. Earnings may be determined on a piece-rate, salary, commission or some other basis, but in all such cases, the overtime pay due must be computed using the employee's average hourly rate. Employers are also required to maintain accurate time and payroll records. The FLSA provides that employers who violate the law are liable to employees for their back wages and, as a general rule, an equal amount in liquidated damages. Back wages and liquidated damages are paid directly to the affected employees.

For more information on the FLSA and other federal laws administered by the Wage and Hour Division, call the division's Pittsburgh District Office at 412-395-4996 or its toll-free helpline at 866-4US-WAGE (487-9243). Information also is available at <http://www.dol.gov/whd>

1/29/14

(2)

BECKLEY (WVVA) -- The city of Beckley held its second council meeting under new leadership tonight, and right out of the gate things are starting to change.

Tonight the council voted for a temporary freeze on hiring new city employees and a ten percent decrease in spending for all departments. This freeze will give the town council time to look over the city's spending habits and find ways to stay within their budget. The current budget is over 17 million dollars per year.

The temporary freeze on hiring gives the new mayor a chance to see what cutbacks need to be made before adding new staff. The mayor says he needs these two things to happen in order to properly deal with the budget process.

The council also unanimously approved the promotion of Lonnie Christian as the new Chief of Police for the city of Beckley.

Christian will be sworn in Wednesday morning at 10 a.m.

1/29/14

(2)

RICHWOOD, W.Va. (AP) -- West Virginia State police say a Richwood police officer has been arrested in the theft of prescription pain pills from a police evidence room.

State police spokesman Sgt. Michael Baylous says 42-year-old Gerald Paul Tinney Jr. of Craigsville was arrested Tuesday on charges of breaking and entering, entering without breaking and delivery of a controlled substance.

Baylous says an investigation found Tinney and another man illegally entered the Richwood police department's evidence room on Dec. 26 in which about 30 hydrocodone pills were stolen.

Baylous says Tinney was arraigned in Nicholas County Magistrate Court. Tinney is being held on \$35,000 bond in the Central Regional Jail. Jail records didn't indicate whether Tinney has an attorney.

Baylous says an arrest of the second suspect is pending.

1/29/14

(8)

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – United States Attorney Booth Goodwin today announced that former Mingo County Commissioner David L. Baisden was sentenced to 20 months in federal prison for using his public office to commit extortion. In June 2009, Baisden, 67, of Delbarton, West Virginia, shook down the Appalachian Tire store in Williamson, West Virginia, for a deep discount on tires for his personal car, threatening to cut off the store's county business unless it complied. When Appalachian refused Baisden's demand, he used his authority as the commission's purchasing agent to make good on his threat, stripping Appalachian of nearly \$60,000 in county business.

More recently, Baisden played a key role in a scheme to obstruct a federal investigation of former Mingo County Sheriff Eugene Crum. In early 2013, Baisden learned that a Mingo County drug defendant was informing to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) regarding alleged criminal conduct by Crum. Baisden and other county officials orchestrated a scheme to remove the informant's defense attorney, who was encouraging the FBI cooperation, and replace him with another attorney handpicked by Baisden. Former Mingo County Circuit Judge Michael Thornsberry and former Mingo County Prosecuting Attorney Michael Sparks have pleaded guilty in connection with that scheme.

"The people of Mingo County and southern West Virginia are sick and tired of crooked politicians," said U.S. Attorney Goodwin. "They deserve honest leaders who will work hard to make West Virginia a better place, not feather their own nests. These prosecutions should send a strong message: politicians are not above the law, and there are serious consequences for abusing the public's trust."

Goodwin's office forced Baisden off the Mingo County Commission last October as part of a plea agreement. That agreement barred Baisden from ever seeking or serving in public office again.

As part of Baisden's sentence, United States District Court Judge John T. Copenhaver, Jr., ordered him to repay nearly \$8,000 to Appalachian Tire and the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company to reimburse the profits he cost them. After he completes his prison time, Baisden will spend three years on federal supervised release.

The FBI and the West Virginia State Police are conducting the investigation of corruption in Mingo County. Counsel to the United States Attorney Steven Ruby and Assistant United States Attorney Haley Bunn are in charge of the prosecutions.

1/31/14

(2, 8)

WVVA--According to a new report, nearly 4000 West Virginians will die prematurely each year due to smoking or exposure to secondhand smoke.

The "Best Practices for Comprehensive Tobacco Control Programs," report, by the Centers for Disease Control, shows that West Virginia received \$173.3 million in tobacco excise taxes and payments from the 1998 Master Settlement Agreement with tobacco companies.

However, the state continues to cut funds to tobacco prevention programs. The budget for this year is \$3.26 million. The CDC recommends the state spends about eight times that amount.

West Virginians can get help quitting smoking from the WV Tobacco Quit Line at 1-877-966-8784. Help in quitting may also be found at 1-800-QUIT-NOW or online at www.cdc.gov/tips.

1/31/14

(8)

MANCHIN, ROCKEFELLER, RAHALL ANNOUNCE \$3.8 MILLION TO ASSIST HOUSEHOLDS WITH ENERGY COSTS

Washington, D.C. – Today, U.S. Senators Joe Manchin and Jay Rockefeller, along with Congressman Nick Rahall (all D-W.Va.), announced West Virginia will receive \$3,857,811 from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to help West Virginians meet their energy costs. These funds offer additional support for West Virginia's Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), administered by the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, and will assist hundreds of thousands of low-income households with home energy assistance this winter and summer.

"As America still faces an anemic economy, many West Virginians are doing their best to make ends meet, but sometimes it's harder to balance the checkbooks at the end of the month, especially at times when our energy costs remain unforgivingly high," Senator Manchin said. "I am pleased that this funding will help eligible West Virginians keep their homes warmer this winter and cooler during the summertime."

"When our winters are especially tough like this year, we are reminded of the importance of a warm home," Senator Rockefeller said. "Unfortunately, this comfort can run up West Virginians' electric bills forcing some families to choose between keeping their kids warm or putting food on the table. This funding is well-timed and critically important relief for those families most in need this winter."

"Without such an important safety net program like LIHEAP, some of our most vulnerable citizens, especially seniors, would be forced into possibly life-threatening situations, having to choose between heating their homes and feeding their families," said Rahall, who has pressed the Congress to fully fund LIHEAP. "These funds will be a welcome relief, helping many West Virginians stay warm during this particularly harsh winter."

Senators Manchin and Rockefeller fought to make Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program a top priority as forthcoming budget proposals were drafted. In the fall, they sent letters to Senate leadership and Appropriations Committee chairs, along with letters to HHS Secretary Sebelius and the White House.

2/1/14

(2)

CHARLESTON (WVVA) -- Water is available for those who were affected by the West Virginia chemical spill once again.

Bottled water is being handed out at several volunteer fire departments, and a water tanker is up and running at a mall in Elkview.

This is all happening as concerns linger about the safety of the water supply, after the January 9 chemical leak.

Since then, there have been reports of MCHM, formaldehyde and other chemicals in the water.

2/3/14

(8)

WASHINGTON D.C. — Ahead of the fifth anniversary of the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) reauthorization this week, Senator Jay Rockefeller, a key architect of the law who led its reauthorization in 2009 with former Senators Ted Kennedy (MA) and Olympia Snowe (ME), hailed the law's benefits which have greatly improved health outcomes for children who would have otherwise been without access to health care. Currently, CHIP covers eight million children nationwide and 37,000 children in West Virginia.

"CHIP has made profound positive changes in the lives of millions of American children and their families. The law has opened the door to coverage for all children so they're able to access critical health, dental and mental health care, which are all important to a healthy start in life. I am so proud to have been part of the important efforts so far to ensure access to vital care for our nation's youth," **Rockefeller said.** "We are on our way to achieving full coverage for all of our nation's children, but we must do more. Later this year we will have another opportunity to extend and strengthen CHIP so that working families can continue to have an affordable and dependable option for protecting the health and well-being of their children."

Building on his long-standing commitment to bring health care access to working families, the underserved and disabled, Rockefeller today introduced the **Medicaid and CHIP Continuous Quality Act (MCQA)**. The legislation would further strengthen Medicaid and CHIP by:

- Eliminating inconsistent care by requiring 12 month "continuous eligibility" in Medicaid and CHIP;
- Providing performance bonuses to states for meeting specified criteria for enrollment and retention in the Medicaid program; and
- Making accurate reports on the quality of care provided by these programs possible for the first time.

In April 2007, speaking on the Senate floor about the introduction of the CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2007, Rockefeller reflected on his experience as a VISTA volunteer in Emmons, WV, and how it influenced his decision to focus throughout his career on improving access to health care for children.

"In 1964, when I first came to West Virginia as a VISTA volunteer in Emmons, I was shocked to learn that many of the school-age children living there had never been to a dentist before. I made raising health care standards one of my first priorities in Emmons, and we ultimately got a bus to bring children to the Tiskelwah grade school in Charleston for dental care... A healthy start in life is a necessary component in preparing our children to lead healthy, happy and productive lives in the future," **Rockefeller said in 2007.**

"Since it was reauthorized by Congress five years ago, CHIP continued to provide dependable quality health coverage affordable for West Virginia families. The number of uninsured children under 200 percent of the poverty level has dropped by more than 40 percent points since the program began. Looking towards 2015 and no Congressional appropriation, we face the issue of how CHIP will best continue to serve these families and how it can best transition through changes under the ACA. We know Senator Rockefeller will do his utmost to assure this transition happens in a way that does not compromise these gains," **said Sharon Carte, Executive Director of West Virginia CHIP.**

"When I see a patient who has CHIP dental coverage, I am able to give them the care they need without worrying about financial constraints. That means I'm able to provide the best possible care no matter the family's circumstances," **said Dr. Kim Lough, a pediatric dentist at Just for Kids Dentistry.** "I've personally seen friends benefit from this safety-net, as they immediately became eligible for CHIP coverage after losing their job. Their kids never had to miss an appointment. That's exactly what this program is designed to do."

The CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2009 not only renewed CHIP, but it also strengthened and expanded the original law by: improving child-focused quality measures like data collection and the dissemination of health quality information, streamlining enrollment procedures, and improving state outreach practices to more easily reach and enroll youth. In West Virginia, the state Legislature took action after the reauthorization to strengthen the law by expanding dental and mental health benefits and increasing eligibility for vision coverage. Studies have shown that children enrolled in CHIP have demonstrated improvements in their ability to pay attention in class, school attendance, reading scores, and participation in school and childhood activities. If CHIP is not extended this year, 1.9 million children stand to completely lose their health care coverage.

2/4/14

(8)

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) -- Federal prosecutors say former Virginia Gov. Bob McDonnell has no legal right to see the instructions that were given to a grand jury that indicted him on corruption charges.

In court papers filed in Richmond, prosecutors say McDonnell's lawyers used a motion for disclosure "as a public forum to castigate the government" without stating any legal basis for lifting the secrecy that normally applies to grand jury proceedings.

Monday's filing comes in response to a strongly worded motion by McDonnell that questioned the validity of the charges against him and his wife, Maureen.

The McDonnells are accused of accepting thousands of dollars in gifts from the former CEO of a dietary supplements company in exchange for promoting his products. Their trial has been set for July.

2/4/14

(1)

CHARLESTON, W.Va. —U.S. Attorney Booth Goodwin announced that Williamson, W.Va.-based employee leasing firm, Aracoma Contracting, LLC ("Aracoma"), was sentenced to three years of probation and ordered to pay more than \$4 million in restitution and forfeit another \$405,000 in connection with a structuring scheme involving more than \$2 million in cash withdrawals from the company's bank accounts once held at a Mingo County bank.

"Structuring" involves the breaking down of cash transactions in amounts of \$10,000 or less for the purpose of avoiding a financial institution's reporting requirements to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

Acting on behalf of Aracoma, its principals Jerome Edward Russell, 50, of Williamson and Frelin R. Workman, 58, of Belfrey, Kentucky formed a longstanding relationship with Bank of Mingo, and, particularly, one of its employees at the bank's Williamson branch. From January of 2009 through April of 2012, Aracoma structured at least \$2.2 million out of Bank of Mingo. Russell and Workman also enlisted the assistance of a number of individuals who agreed to appear at the Williamson branch and cash cashier's checks. The cash from the bank withdrawals was later brought back to Aracoma's office to be used to pay cash payroll.

During the scheme, Aracoma sent advance forms to the Williamson branch prior to the structured cash withdrawals, so the bank could prepare the cash ahead of time. Bank of Mingo would then prepare cashier's checks in the names of the identified

individual or individuals and pre-count the requested cash. When an individual or individuals from Aracoma appeared at a Bank of Mingo teller window, a bank representative presented them with the cashier's check in the individual's name. The check was immediately endorsed and the individual was given the pre-counted cash.

Despite numerous times when multiple individuals appeared at the same teller window to endorse cashier's checks that exceeded \$10,000 on Aracoma's line of credit, Bank of Mingo routinely failed to file notifications, known as currency transaction reports, as required by law.

As part of its sentencing, Aracoma admitted that substantially all of the cash structured out of Bank of Mingo by Aracoma was used to pay the company's payroll in cash, therefore avoiding the payment of required federal employment taxes and also to make bribe payments to a former BrickStreet field auditor, Arville Sargent.

Sargent, 52, of Chapmanville, previously pleaded guilty in March of 2013 to honest services mail fraud and tax evasion. As a field auditor, Sargent purposely allowed four "employee leasing" companies, including Aracoma, to falsify documents drastically understating their actual payroll. In exchange for saving those policyholders millions of dollars in insurance premiums rightfully owed to BrickStreet, Sargent accepted hundreds of thousands of dollars in cash bribes and other things of value, including a Yamaha Rhino all-terrain vehicle. At today's sentencing, the district court held Aracoma jointly and severally liable for the \$4 million owed in restitution to BrickStreet and the State of West Virginia by Sargent, Russell and Workman.

Sargent was previously sentenced in October of 2013 to six years in federal prison. Russell and Workman each were sentenced to their thirty months of imprisonment for their role in bribery scheme.

The FBI, the IRS, the West Virginia State Police and the West Virginia Insurance Commission conducted the investigations. Assistant United States Attorney Thomas Ryan is in charge of the prosecutions.

2/4/14

(2)

PRINCETON (WVVA) - A mistrial has been declared in the case of a Mercer County man charged with sex crimes against children, after health issues arose with a juror.

The word came from Judge William Sadler's courtroom Friday evening, after a juror experienced anxiety and chest pains.

Sadler said he could not find precedent with a similar case, and the jury was dismissed.

A status hearing is scheduled for next week.

PRINCETON (WVVA) - A Mercer County jury is now deliberating the fate of a man accused of sexually abusing two children.

John Spaulding is facing a 57 count indictment, including six counts of sexual assault, one count of sexual abuse and 50 counts of possession of child pornography.

On Thursday, Spaulding took the stand in his own defense and told the jury that he purchased the laptop where State Police found the child porn, but his co-defendant, Kimberley Cox was the one who used it.

He claimed he did not even know how to make a folder to organize files.

WVVA's Caroline Bach is in the courtroom and will have more when a verdict is reached.

PRINCETON (WVVA) -- The trial continues Thursday for a man facing a 57 count indictment, including six counts of sexual assault, one count of sexual abuse and 50 counts of possession of child pornography.

Thursday, the defendant, John Spaulding took the stand.

Spaulding told the jury under oath that he purchased the laptop where State Police found the child porn, but his co-defendant, Kimberley Cox was the one who used it. He claims he does not even know how to make a folder to organize files.

As for what investigators found on his phone, he says that Cox would use it while they took long driving tips around the region.

When cross-examined, Spaulding also told the jury that it wasn't true when he told troopers there was a lot of porn on the computer, and he knew about it.

After closing arguments, the case will be left in the hands of the jury.

PRINCETON (WVVA) - A jury was seated and testimony began in the trial of a Mercer County man accused multiple sex crimes against children.

John Spaulding, 40, was in court for day one of his trial Tuesday before Judge William Sadler in Mercer County Circuit Court.

Spaulding faces a 57-count indictment -- including six counts of sexual assault, one count of sexual abuse and 50 counts of possession of child pornography.

Jury selection concluded Tuesday, followed by opening arguments. After that, the prosecution began calling its first witnesses.

According to the indictment against Spaulding, the sexual assault charges involve a child under the age of 12. The abuse charge involves a victim under 16.

Last week, Spaulding's defense requested a change of venue for the trial. Sadler stated at the time that a decision would be made if the court was unable to seat a jury.

38-year-old Kimberly Cox -- also charged in connection with the abuse -- was previously sentenced to 35 years behind bars.

2/5/14

(2, 8)

CHARLESTON (NEWS RELEASE) -- The West Virginia State Police has received a \$30,000 Grant from the WV Technical Assistance Broad Band Grant Program, to develop and Law Enforcement Sex Offender Mapping Program. The award was a part of solicitation offered by the West Virginia Geological and Economic Survey who oversees the WV Broadband Mapping Program.

This grant will enable the West Virginia State Police to create a mapping system for registered sex offenders in the State. This will enable Troopers a quick method to identify all sex offenders within a given region by making inquiries to the mapping system. Under the current operations, Troopers would have to manually search sex offender files on detachments which are maintained in an alphabetical order. This is a time consuming effort to identify sex offenders within a given area of a particular location.

This mapping system will save vital time in instances of child abductions, as one of the first investigative leads conducted is to locate convicted sex offenders within a given area of the abduction. This mapping system will have the capabilities to search for sex offenders within a given radius of a particular address. This program will provide Troopers with vastly more information than is available on similar public mapping systems.

The West Virginia State Police has partnered with West Virginia University through the WV3C (West Virginia Cyber Crime Cooperative) to develop this program. The West Virginia State Police hopes to have a working product available by July 2014.

Questions or requests for interviews should be directed to Lieutenant D. B. Swiger at 304-293-6400

2/6/14

(2)

PRINCETON (WVVA) -- Princeton residents received a letter at the end of January from city officials listing their concerns about the city. Number one on the list was the reoccurring flooding on Stafford Drive.

People in Princeton say it has been a problem for years, after a heavy rain or a large amount of snow melts.

Initial estimates for a project to fix it were said to be up to \$10 million, but it should end up being significantly lower than that. The city has secured \$250,000 to work on the project.

"It's not a formal solution, and it hasn't been engineered yet," says Elke Doom, city manager. "But there's discussion that area is so low that the best thing that could happen there is some kind of a holding tank that could either be pumped out when the water levels go down or some time of an engineered field that could be drained out very slowly."

The project is on hold until there is a decision made whether to move the city's municipal offices near the location of the flooding. Doom says that would make logistical issues much easier if they could use their own property to drain the area.

2/7/14

(2)

CHARLESTON (NEWS RELEASE) – U.S. Attorney Booth Goodwin announced that Donald R. "Duke" McGann, 62, of Hinton, West Virginia, was sentenced to three years of probation, the first two of which are to be served on home confinement. McGann was previously convicted of tax evasion and structuring cash withdrawals from various banks in southern West Virginia as part of a larger check cashing scheme orchestrated with several coal operators. "Structuring" involves the breaking down of cash transactions in amounts of \$10,000 or less for the purpose of avoiding a financial institution's reporting requirements to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

As part of the scheme, McGann would provide a coal operator a bogus invoice reflecting the delivery of goods or services. The coal operator then provided McGann a check, which was deposited into McGann's checking account.

Sometimes with the aid of others, McGann withdrew the cash from his checking account in increments of \$10,000 or less to avoid the bank's reporting requirement. McGann returned the cash to the coal operator less a ten-percent fee. The cash was used to pay cash wages or otherwise kept by the coal operator as a tax-free windfall.

In 2009 alone, McGann cashed over \$770,000 checks for three different coal operators.

This case was investigated by the IRS Criminal Investigative Division that focused on James Trent, 53, of Rock View, Wyoming County and others in a larger tax evasion and structuring scheme. Trent was sentenced on November 15, 2013 to three years in prison for tax evasion. Assistant United States Attorney Thomas Ryan handled the prosecution.

2/8/14

(2)

GREENBRIER COUNTY (WVVA)- The Greenbrier County Grand Jury Indicted 45 people during their February sitting. Of those 45 indictments, 18 were for meth making charges.

Trooper William Snyder says, "Methamphetamines are growing leaps in bounds in the last year."

As the issue continues to grow so does officer training. Police officers are getting more equip and now know the signs of a meth lab.

For concerned citizens, Trooper Snyder says you can help catch these criminals. "If they see individuals with backpacks that look suspicious going into the wood line they need to let us know. We'll check it out. A lot of our arrests have come from tips."

2/9/14

(8)

JUMPING BRANCH, W. Va (WVVA)-- A Summers County Commissioner is charged after a late night car accident near Jumping Branch.

According to a police report, 41-year-old Tony Williams was traveling Westbound on Route 3 Saturday when he went around a curve and flipped his Chevy Silverado on its top.

Upon receiving a breathalyzer test, police determined Williams had more than two times the legal limit of alcohol in his system.

Williams is charged with aggravated DUI. He spent the night in Southern Regional Jail but as of Sunday morning, is out on bond.

No injuries were reported during the accident, which temporarily blocked the road while crews cleared the scene.

Jumping Branch Fire, Station 13, and Hinton Fire Departments responded, along with the Summers County Sheriff's Department.

2/10/14

(2)

PREMIER (WVVA) - A coal truck accident leaves at least 800 customers from Welch to laeger without power in McDowell County.

The accident occurred just after 5:30 a.m. near Premier when the driver of a truck belonging to B&J Trucking apparently lost control and knocked down power poles before crashing into a creek.

The truck was not hauling any cargo at the time of the crash. The driver was uninjured.

Crews were on scene for several hours working to repair the damage to the utility pole.

WVVA has a crew in McDowell County today and will have more from the scene this evening on WVVA News

2/12/14

(2)

BECKLEY, W.Va. – United States Attorney Booth Goodwin announced today that Kristi Ball, 39, of Princeton, West Virginia, pled guilty in federal court in Bluefield to distributing hydromorphone, a powerful and addictive prescription pain medication. Ball admitted that on January 16, 2013, she sold three hydromorphone pills to a person who was cooperating with law enforcement authorities. The drug deal took place in Princeton.

Ball faces up to 20 years in prison and a \$1,000,000 fine. Senior United States District Judge David A. Faber scheduled the sentencing for May 27, 2014.

The West Virginia State Police Bureau of Criminal Investigations and the Southern Regional Drug and Violent Crime Task Force conducted the investigation. Assistant United States Attorney John File is handling the prosecution.

This case is being prosecuted as part of an ongoing effort led by the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of West Virginia to combat the illicit sale and misuse of prescription drugs. The U.S. Attorney's Office, joined by federal, state and local law enforcement agencies, is committed to aggressively pursuing and shutting down illegal pill trafficking, eliminating open air drug markets, and curtailing the spread of opiate painkillers in communities across the Southern District

2/13/14

(2)

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) -- Authorities have uncovered a moonshine operation while responding to an assault complaint in southwest Virginia.

Officials say the Wythe County Sheriff's Office arrested 47-year-old Michael Pickle for felony sexual assault on Sunday when two moonshine stills were discovered at a Rural Retreat home.

The Virginia Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control says its agents also seized 13 firearms, active mash, marijuana, untaxed liquor and other controlled substances from the home.

ABC agents continue to investigate the alcohol violations and criminal charges are pending, following laboratory analysis.

It's the second time in the past month that ABC agents have collaborated with the Wythe County Sheriff's Office.

Last month, the agency discovered two illegal whiskey stills behind a Wytheville residence but no arrests have been made.

2/14/14

(2)

Bluefield, W.Va. (WVVA)--Beware of a new mail scam designed to entice victims into cashing a counterfeit money order.

The image accompanying this article was sent to a woman in McDowell County.

Here is how the scam works. A letter sent with the money order indicates you are a secret shopper on secret assignment.

You are urged to cash the money order worth \$997.50 and spend \$800 of it on three "Green Dot Moneypack" re loadable debit cards. You then scratch the numbers off the back of the debit cards and send that information to one of two listed e-mail addresses.

It appears to be a quick way to make almost \$200 except the money order is a fake.

Postal officials have been made aware of the scam

2/16/14

(2)

HINTON (WVVA) -- A local elementary teacher is arrested on drug charges Saturday.

Chief Deputy J.K. Farmer of Summers County arrested Fredrick Huffman during a traffic stop on the Route 20 bypass near Hinton.

Huffman is a teacher at Gilbert Elementary School in Mingo County. He is being charged with felony possession of marijuana.

Farmer recovered more than one ounce of the drug, plus weight scales and a firearm from Huffman's car.

Huffman's possession of the gun was legal, but it will call for a stiffer penalty of the drug crime.

2/17/14

(2)

PRINCETON, W. Va (WVVA)-- Police tell WVVA that crimes against children are time-consuming for police to investigate.

Sgt. Melissa Clemons, who investigates these crimes on the West Virginia State Police Crimes Against Children unit, said the hunt for perpetrators can drain resources, and take officers years to finish-- due to the nature of those crimes.

The growth of file sharing and Internet use among offenders only perpetuates the problem, she said.

Clemons tells WVVA there were 194 people arrested in WV for child crimes last year, charged with 1,000 felonies. 574 investigations were initiated, and 482 children interviewed, with the help of organizations like Child Protect in Mercer County.

The bulk of all of that was shared between 14 troopers, who are overloaded with cases.

But a new bill could change that.

Legislators like Delegate Linda Phillips in Wyoming County are working on a plan to bring in 50 new troopers, pushing the more experienced ones up to the Crimes Against Children Unit.

"It would just create a domino effect that since we [would] have more troopers," said Phillips, "[instead we would] put this trooper in [one] area, and then this trooper will move up into the crimes against children unit."

Those more experienced police officers would be best suited to take over crimes against children investigations, said Clemons.

"To be able to do a thorough investigation, and to be able to sit down with someone who's committing these acts and to be able to interview them," she said, "and get them to tell you, that's something that you need [to already know how to do effectively.]"

Experts we spoke with say nationally, 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys will be sexually abused before they turn 18. The proposed bill could change that, said Clemons.

Delegate Phillips hopes to create funding for the 50 new troopers to be hired, within the state's 2015 budget. She says she's "hopeful" it will work, and the new class of police officers would begin training soon after.

2/18/14

(8)

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) -- The West Virginia Senate has passed a bill to make drugs used in the production of methamphetamine available only by prescription.

The bill will make pseudoephedrines a Schedule IV prescription drug and exempt medicines that can't easily be converted to meth.

The bill has been passed to the House for action.

Before passage, the Senate voted to amend the bill to allow individuals charged with possession of pseudoephedrine, and who purchased the drug legally in another state, to go to court and have charges dropped. Sen. Corey Palumbo explained this process may be used by a person only once.

Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin said he was open to taking a close look at a final bill.

Only Oregon and Mississippi have passed similar laws.

In response to the bill, the Consumer Healthcare Products Association [released a statement Wednesday](#) saying the bill puts "onerous burdens on responsible taxpayers" in West Virginia.

The following brand name drugs contain pseudoephedrine (Source: [Wikipedia](#)).

- Actifed
- Aleve D
- Allegra D
- Allerclear-D
- Benadryl Plus
- Cirrus
- Claritin-D
- Codral Original
- Congestal
- Demazin
- Etor
- Nurofen Cold & Flu
- Rhinex Flash

- Rhinos SR
- Sinufed
- Sinutab
- Sudafed Decongestant
- Unifed
- Zyrtec-D 12 Hour

2/19/2014

(2)

CHARLESTON (NEWS RELEASE) – United States Attorney Booth Goodwin announced that John Wayne Taylor, Jr., 37, of Scarbro, West Virginia, was sentenced in federal court in Charleston today to two years and nine months in federal prison for distributing cocaine.

Taylor previously pled guilty in November of 2013, admitting that on May 30, 2013, he sold approximately .41 grams of cocaine to an individual cooperating with the police. The drug deal took place near Scarbro.

In imposing the sentence, the Court also considered Taylor's admission that he had distributed 300 oxycodone pills and approximately 4 grams of cocaine over a period of time.

Taylor was sentenced by United States District Judge Thomas E. Johnston. The case was investigated by the Central West Virginia Drug Task Force and the prosecution was handled by Assistant United States Attorney John File

2/21/14

(8)

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) -- The House of Delegates and Senate are at odds on how best to balance West Virginia's budget.

Senate propositions to raise sales and cigarette taxes were dismissed by the House in a closed meeting Thursday.

Senate President Jeff Kessler said without bills to increase revenue, the Legislature will have to make more budget cuts or dip further into the state's "rainy day" fund.

Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin's 2015 executive budget already proposed using around \$84 million of the nearly \$1 billion fund. Kessler said without generating more revenue through taxes as much as 25 percent of the fund could be needed to balance the budget.

House Speaker Tim Miley said the hesitance for House Democrats to increase taxes has a lot to do with 2014 being an election year.

2/24/14

(2)

BECKLEY (WVVA) - Beckley Police are seeking a suspect after an alleged robbery outside an apartment complex.

Officers responded to the parking lot of Wilbrian Apartments around 11 p.m. Saturday night, where a female victim said a white male in blue Dodge truck pulled up beside her, got out, pushed her and took some cash from her before driving away.

Police say they have a person of interest in the case.

If you have any information, contact the Beckley Police Department at 304-256-1720 or Crimestoppers at 304-255-STOP.

2/25/14

(2)

MCDOWELL (WVVA) – Three people are injured in a house fire late Monday night.

Dispatchers say a fire broke out in a home on Shaft Hollow Road near War, just after 11 p.m.

The family was home at the time.

Dispatchers say two people were taken to Welch Community Hospital by ambulance while another family member was airlifted.

Dispatchers could not confirm if any of those injuries were life threatening.

As of 1:00 Tuesday morning, crews had cleared the scene.

Stay with WVVA on-air and on-line as we continue to follow this breaking news story.

2/27/14

(2)

BECKLEY (NEWS RELEASE) – United States Attorney Booth Goodwin announced that two men facing drug charges appeared in federal court in Beckley today before United States District Judge Irene Berger.

Michael Harshaw Jr., 37, of Hinton, West Virginia, pled guilty to using a telephone to facilitate a felony drug offense and to possessing alprazolam (Xanax) without a prescription.

Harshaw admitted that on October 3, 2012, he had a telephone conversation with an individual cooperating with law enforcement authorities in which they set up a meeting to do a drug deal. Later that day the two met in Hinton, and Harshaw sold the individual five oxycodone pills.

Harshaw also admitted that on October 10, 2012, authorities searched his home in Hinton and found that he had 17 Xanax pills containing alprazolam, a highly addictive controlled substance. Harshaw did not have a prescription for the pills.

He faces up to ten years in prison and a fine of \$500,000 when he is scheduled on June 26, 2014. The case was investigated by the West Virginia State Police Bureau of Criminal Investigations.

William Smith, 40, of Crab Orchard, was sentenced to one year and two months in prison for distributing oxycodone. Smith pled guilty in November of 2013, admitting that on January 3, 2013, he sold two oxycodone pills to a person cooperating with law enforcement authorities.

The drug deal took place at Smith's residence in Crab Orchard. The case was investigated by the Raleigh County Sheriff's Office Drug and Narcotic Investigative Unit and the Beckley Police Department Narcotics Unit.

These cases were prosecuted as part of an ongoing effort led by the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of West Virginia to combat the illicit sale and misuse of prescription drugs.

The U.S. Attorney's Office, joined by federal, state and local law enforcement agencies, is committed to aggressively pursuing and shutting down illegal pill trafficking, eliminating open air drug markets, and curtailing the spread of opiate painkillers in communities across the Southern District.

3/3/14

(2)

JODIE (WVVA) - A Fayette County man has been arrested after he allegedly beat and robbed a man he believed to be a "snitch" during an apparent drug deal.

James Matthew Moore, 53, of Jodie was taken into custody Sunday following the execution of a search warrant at his home.

Moore is charged with first-degree robbery in connection with a Feb. 13th incident in which a Nicholas County man claimed he went to Moore's residence to buy prescription pills, then was assaulted by Moore because the suspect believed him to be a "snitch."

The victim initially told deputies that he had went to the Jodie area to check on a friend when he was struck in the head multiple times with a handgun, threatened with death and held at gunpoint for several hours before he was robbed of a small amount of cash.

The victim later admitted he went to the area to buy pills.

He further stated that he had been told by Moore that if he told anyone what happened that he and his family would be killed.

An investigation into the allegations by the victim revealed that Moore had previously been convicted in 2009 for delivery of a controlled substance -- morphine -- and was prohibited from possessing firearms or ammunition.

Moore is being held at Southern Regional Jail on \$5,000 bond.

The incident remains under investigation by the Central West Virginia Drug Task Force. The Fayette County Sheriff's Office and West Virginia State Police assisted in executing the search warrants at Moore's residence.

3/5/14

(2)

BECKLEY, W.Va. – A Pennsylvania man was sentenced today to 18 months in federal prison for selling oxycodone in Beckley, United States Attorney Booth Goodwin announced. David Hudson, 39, previously admitted that in July 2013 he sold several oxycodone pills to a confidential informant working with the Beckley Police Department Drug Unit. The drug deal took place in the parking lot of a motel on Harper Road.

United States District Judge Irene C. Berger imposed today's sentence.

This case was prosecuted as part of an ongoing effort led by the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of West Virginia to combat the illicit sale and misuse of prescription drugs. The United States Attorney's Office, joined by federal, state and local law enforcement agencies, is committed to aggressively pursuing and shutting down illegal pill trafficking, eliminating open air drug markets, and curtailing the spread of opiate painkillers.

3/10/14

(2)

BLUEFIELD (WVVA) - According to Appalachian Power's online outage map, service has been fully restored to customers in McDowell, Mercer and Tazewell counties following a service disruption earlier Monday.

BLUEFIELD (WVVA) - Nearly 13,000 customers were without power Monday after a transmission line went out of service.

Appalachian Power spokesperson Phil Moyer says the 138kV line went out shortly after 2 p.m., as crews were conducting maintenance at the Minnix Mountain Station near Montcalm.

The line supplies power to the Minnix Mountain, New Hope and Switchback stations, which provide power to nearly 13,000 customers in Mercer and McDowell counties.

Moyer said most customers were expected to be restored by 4 p.m.

BLUEFIELD, W. Va (WVVA)-- Appalachian Power spokesperson Phil Moyer confirms there are thousands of people without power in Mercer County, as well as multiple outages in McDowell and Tazewell counties.

At 2:45 PM Monday, there were 11,682 outages in Mercer County alone. 585 were reported in McDowell, and 1274 were reported in Tazewell County.

Moyer says it is believed to be a transmission line outage causing these problems across the area.

Appalachian Power employees are currently investigating the incident. They expect restoration to happen by 6 PM Monday.

Stay tuned on-air and online to WVVA for more details.

3/10/14

(2)

BLUEFIELD, W.Va. (AP) - A Princeton man convicted in a crackdown on prescription drug trafficking will spend more than year in prison.

Bobby Michael Short Jr. pleaded guilty last November to drug distribution charges. He was sentenced Monday in U.S. District Court in Bluefield to 15 months in prison.

Prosecutors say Short and two co-defendants sold hydromorphone pills to a confidential informant in and around Mercer County. Hydromorphone is a prescription painkiller.

The charges stemmed from the Bluefield Pill Initiative. Launched in 2011, it targets prescription drug trafficking in Mercer, McDowell and Wyoming counties.

3/12/14

(2)

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) -- State Attorney General Patrick Morrisey is warning West Virginians about a scam that's landing in email inboxes around the country.

Morrisey says scammers are sending fake "funeral notice" emails that often contain the names, addresses and logos of local funeral homes.

Those getting the email click a link that ultimately lets their computer be hijacked by malicious software.

Once the computer is infected, the software can be used to steal personal and financial information or send out spam emails.

Morrisey says not to click on links in emails from unknown people and make sure computer anti-virus software is updated.

Consumers are urged to report the emails to the attorney general's consumer protection division at 1-800-368-8808 or online at www.wvago.gov

3/12/14

(2)

KIMBALL (WVVA) - A McDowell County man has been arrested after police find crack and oxycodone in his possession.

Harold Neal, 38, was taken into custody Tuesday during an investigative stop in which sheriff's deputies found 15 white rocks believed to be crack cocaine and 13 Oxycodone pills, all packaged for sale.

Deputies say Neal was also carrying a large amount of cash, according to a news release from the sheriff's office.

Neal was charged with two counts of possession with intent to deliver a Schedule II controlled substance.

He was arraigned and placed on \$50,000 bond. He is being held at the McDowell County Holding Unit awaiting transport to South Western Regional Jail.

3/13/14

(2, 8)

(WVVA)--Senator Joe Manchin introduces a bill to ban a new powerful painkiller.

The measure would withdraw the Federal Drug Administration's approval of the drug Zohydro ER and prevent the agency from approving similar drugs unless they are formulated to prevent abuse.

Manchin says Zohydro is ten times stronger than Vicodin and Lortab and has the capability of killing an individual in just two tablets.

"I have tried reasoning with the FDA, and I've repeatedly requested the agency change its course on this dangerous drug. Their refusal to budge forces me to introduce legislation. Because of this painkiller's high potential for misuse and abuse, Zohydro poses a severely dangerous threat to our communities in West Virginia and across our country," says U.S. Senator Joe Manchin.

Manchin says the FDA should not compromise patient safety for financial gain.

3/16/14

(2)

BECKLEY (WVVA) -- Police are beefing up their DUI patrols this month. The Raleigh County Sheriff's Office will be increasing their patrols and sobriety checkpoints.

Deputies are targeting impaired drivers, whether under the influence of alcohol or drugs. They're also keeping an eye out for revoked or suspended drivers, plus any general traffic violations.

Funding for the patrols is through the West Virginia Commission on Drunk Driving Prevention.

3/17/14

(2)

PRINCETON (WVVA) - The driver involved in a fatal head-on collision in August 2012 is handed a two-to-ten year prison sentence.

Police say 31-year-old Eric Perdue had a blood alcohol content of .379, more than 4.5 times the legal limit, when his white pickup truck crossed the center line on Route 123 near Brushfork.

The victim, Sherri Watkins, was pronounced dead at the scene. Two passengers were also injured.

3/18/14

(2)

A drug task force team conducted a bust that netted a large amount of suspected heroin. It's a drug they say has made a resurgence resulting in multiple overdoses in the area.

Thirty-six-year-old Tyrone Amar was arrested by the Beckley-Raleigh County Drug and Violent Crime Task Force for possession with intent to deliver plus outstanding warrants. Inside his Midway area home on Shephard Lane in Raleigh County, officers discovered more than a pound of marijuana, numerous firearms, a large amount of cash and over 800 individually wrapped packages of suspected heroin.

These packages have an estimated street value of \$35,000.

3/19/14

BEAVER (NEWS RELEASE) - Leah Kirk, age 21, was sentenced today in Beckley, West Virginia, by United States District Court Judge Irene C. Berger to three years of probation and ordered to perform 100 hours of community service.

Kirk previously pleaded guilty in November 2013 to distributing oxycodone, a powerful prescription pain killer. Kirk admitted that between May 15, 2013 and June 12, 2013, she sold several oxycodone pills and alprazolam pills to a confidential informant who was working with the Beckley Police Department and the Raleigh County Sheriff's Department. The drug sale occurred on Eisenhower Drive in Beckley.

This case was prosecuted as part of an ongoing effort led by the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of West Virginia to combat the illicit sale and misuse of prescription drugs and heroin. The United States Attorney's Office, joined by federal, state and local law enforcement agencies, is committed to aggressively pursuing and shutting down illegal pill trafficking, eliminating open air drug markets, and curtailing the spread of opiate painkillers and heroin.

3/19/14

(1, 9)

LEWISBURG (WVVA)- The harsh winter has forced farmers to put extra time and effort into beefing up their cattle.

For some, that means a hefty price tag on fuel, feed and labor to get their livestock ready for the market. Area farmers say they've worked 18 to 20 hour days due to some of the heavy storms.

Ben Tuckwiller, a local farmer says the biggest issue is, "This fluctuation in temperature is very hard for all the cattle to adjust their metabolism."

To keep the cows weight up this winter some people have had to give them ten to fifteen percent more feed than in recent years past.

For farm owners such as Charlie Long, that's meant giving his cattle 3,500 lbs more feed every day compared to last year.

That's how he's kept the weight up on his animals.

"My cattle are about in the same condition they were this time last year but, it's just taken that much more feed to keep them at the same place."

3/21/14

(2)

BECKLEY (WVVA)- Officers with the Beckley Police Department say a man attempted to break into The Beckley Gun and Pawn Shop, late Wednesday night, but was unsuccessful.

No other details are known at this time. Officers are working to get area surveillance from surrounding businesses.

If you have any information you are asked to contact Beckley Police.

3/22/14

(9)

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) -- Kanawha County officials are creating a computer program to catalog hazardous materials storage sites that could threaten the county's waterways.

C.W. Sigman is the county's deputy emergency services director. He says that emergency services and Metro 911 officials are developing the computerized tracking system, which County Commissioner Dave Hardy requested in the aftermath of the January Elk River chemical spill that contaminated the water supply for about 300,000 residents of nine counties.

Hardy says officials need to be proactive in finding facilities that store hazardous materials. Sigman says there are several hundred in Kanawha County.

Sigman says five water plants provide drinking water to Kanawha residents, and all are supplied by rivers.

3/23/14

(2)

MOUNT HOPE (WVVA) -- A routine traffic stop lead police to find \$27,000 and drugs.

Annie Hawkins, 36, and Shannon Carte, 42, of Hico were arrested for possession of a controlled substance, in this case heroin.

The incident happened Sunday afternoon when Corporal William Gritt of Mount Hope pulled over the vehicle on Route 16 for a loose muffler. The officer noticed a large sum of money in plain view on the seat. Then, he searched the car and found residue of heroin.

Both were arrested and taken to the Fayette County Magistrate.

3/23/14

(2)

GLEN JEAN (NEWS RELEASE) -- Two individuals from Raleigh County have been arrested in connection with possessing a clandestine methamphetamine laboratory near a church in the Glen Jean area of Fayette County earlier this afternoon. Sheriff Steve Kessler released the following information concerning these arrests:

At approximately 12:45 p.m. on Sunday, March 23, 2014 Deputy R.D. Stephens of the Fayette County Sheriff's Office was approached by an individual from the Glen Jean Union Church. This church parishioner advised Deputy Stephens that a suspicious vehicle was parked in a wooded area near the church and requested that Deputy Stephens check this vehicle.

As Deputy Stephens approached the vehicle she observed a male and a female actively engaged in sexual intercourse inside of the vehicle. After having the occupants of this vehicle get dressed and exit the vehicle, Deputy Stephens initiated an inquiry into why they were parked near a church and engaged in behavior of this nature. While speaking with these individuals she noted that they appeared to be under the influence of some type of controlled substance. She then contacted one of the Sheriff's Office K-9 Units to respond to the scene. After Deputy W.R. Callison's K-9 indicated the presence of narcotics concealed in the vehicle, Deputies recovered a backpack that was found to contain all of the equipment and precursor chemicals necessary for the operation of a clandestine methamphetamine laboratory.

When this clandestine lab was discovered the male suspect fled into the woods in an attempt to avoid arrest. Deputies W.R. Callison, C.M. Fitzwater and E.A. Shrewsbury chased the male suspect into the woods and, after a brief foot pursuit, were able to take him into custody without incident. This individual began exhibiting symptoms of physical distress consistent with acute methamphetamine intoxication coupled with physical exertion, so he was transported to Plateau Medical Center in Oak Hill to be examined. The female was taken into custody at the scene. Specially trained officers from the West Virginia State Police responded to the scene to dismantle the clandestine methamphetamine laboratory and render it safe.

Steven Blankenship, age 27, of the Clear Fork area of Raleigh County was arrested and charged with the felony offense of Operating or Attempting to Operate a Clandestine Methamphetamine Laboratory, Indecent Exposure and Fleeing from an Officer. Jessica Lusk, age 35, also from the Clear Fork area of Raleigh County was charged with the felony offense of Operating or Attempting to Operate a Clandestine Methamphetamine Laboratory and with the misdemeanor offense of Indecent Exposure. Both will be transported to the Southern Regional Jail pending their arraignment in the Magistrate Court of Fayette County.

"With all of the remote and unpopulated areas throughout Raleigh and Fayette Counties, I have no idea why these two individuals felt the need to park next to a church to engage in their illicit conduct," said Sheriff Kessler. "Their poor choice of location resulted in their arrest for a very serious offense."

This incident remains under investigation by Deputy R.D. Stephens of the Fayette County Sheriff's Office.

3/24/14

(2)

WEST VIRGINIA (WVVA) - There is a new scam we have to warn you about that affects some of the most vulnerable among us: senior citizens.

Scammers are impersonating Social Security employees, telling victims their benefits have been underpaid and they need their bank account routing number to make the adjustment.

This scam doesn't just affect the elderly; it also affects those on long-term disability who collect Social Security checks.

West Virginia Attorney General Patrick Morrisey talked to WVVA about the scam and what people need to know. "What they'll do is they'll say you need to recalculate quickly, we need your information right away so we can get it in the next pay period," Morrisey said. "If someone is trying to pressure you and says if you don't make a decision right away, that's normally a good sign there is something fake going on."

Morrisey said if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. He also warned of another scam that uses guilt tactics to get you to send them your money.

"Someone called posing as a sheriff of a county and said, 'You need to send a check right away, you missed jury duty.'"

Morrisey says the government will typically send a letter before calling. If you don't have it in writing, be sure to ask for it. If it's real, the agency will have no problem sending you something.

"Every time I hear about something like this or other instances where someone is posing as a government official, it makes me sick, because that's when people's guards down."

If you get a call like this, do not give out your personal information. Morrisey suggests getting the caller's name, title, and phone number, then hang up and call the governmental office to verify the claims.

3/24/14

(2)

BLUEFIELD, WV (WVVA) - Spring is time when flowers bloom, temperatures rise, and puppies take over animal shelters.

About this time of year, shelters report seeing an influx of litters.

Mercer County Animal Shelter says they never saw a drop over winter, which they say is unusual.

The cause: pet owners not getting their furry friends neutered or spayed.

When you adopt from a shelter, the animal will already be fixed and have all their shots. But that's not the only reason to adopt.

"When you adopt, you save a life," says Lisa Williams, the director at the shelter. "And you save a life in the shelter also because that opens up a run that another dog can use for two or three more days."

McDowell County Humane Society says they too have had a busy winter, telling WVVA they have had more puppies than ever before.

If you need help getting your pet fixed, call your local animal shelter who can help put you in contact with the right organization.

3/25/14

(2, 8)

CHARLESTON (WVVA) - The brother of West Virginia's governor has pleaded guilty to a federal drug charge.

Carl Tomblin, 50, of Chapmanville, sold oxymorphone to an informant in exchange for cash on five separate occasions in December 2013, according to a news release from U.S. Attorney Booth Goodwin's office.

Tomblin faces up to 20 years in prison when he is sentenced in June.

Following is the full news release:

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – A Chapmanville, W.Va. man who sold the powerful prescription painkiller oxymorphone, commonly sold under the brand name Opana, pleaded guilty today to a federal drug charge, announced U.S. Attorney Booth Goodwin. Carl Tomblin, 50, pleaded guilty to distribution of oxymorphone before United States District Judge John T. Copenhaver, Jr. in Charleston.

On five separate occasions in December of 2013, Tomblin sold oxymorphone to a confidential informant in exchange for cash. Tomblin admitted to law enforcement that he had been purchasing and distributing oxymorphone from approximately May of 2013 through January of 2014.

Tomblin tested positive for the drug Benzodiazepine, commonly known as Valium or Xanax. As a result, the court ordered Tomblin released on home confinement with electronic monitoring. Tomblin faces up to 20 years in federal prison when he is sentenced on June 25, 2014.

The investigation was conducted by the U.S. 119 Task Force and the West Virginia State Police. Assistant United States Attorney Haley Bunn is handling the prosecution.

The prosecution is part of an ongoing effort by the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of West Virginia to combat the illicit sale and misuse of prescription drugs and heroin. The U.S. Attorney's Office, joined by federal, state and local law enforcement agencies, is committed to aggressively pursuing and shutting down illegal pill trafficking, eliminating open air drug markets, and curtailing the spread of opiate painkillers and heroin in communities across the Southern District.

3/25/14

(2)

PRINCETON, W. Va (WVVA)-- Three Concord University football players are back in court Tuesday.

Russell Bailey, Maricco Sanders, and Riyahd Richardson appeared before Judge Derek Swope for pretrial motions.

Each faces multiple charges after police say they went to an apartment for an apparent drug purchase and got into a fight with another person there.

Tuesday, prosecutors asked for permission to bring the victim, Brett Summers, to the stand to testify about what happened. Attorneys debated whether or not he should be granted immunity if he testifies, because defense attorneys allege he was a drug dealer prepared to sell the three players marijuana.

Prosecutors said Summers is a witness valuable to the case who could provide significant information about the ownership of a gun that was taken there, what was taken from the home, and his injuries in the alleged attack.

Defense attorneys questioned his inconsistent statements about whether or not there were drugs in the apartment at the time the crime occurred.

Judge Swope agreed that Summers can testify, with limited immunity. That immunity, he concluded, would only apply when Summers discussed the events involving the three defendants.

[To view previous WVVA reports on the incident, click here.](#)

3/27/14

(2)

BECKLEY (WVVA) - Three women have been sentenced for separate instances of selling oxycodone in the Beckley area.

The following news releases were issued by the U.S. Attorney's Office:

BECKLEY – Cayla Lindsay, age 20, was sentenced today in Beckley, West Virginia, by United States District Court Judge Irene C. Berger to three years of probation, and 100 hours of community service. Lindsay previously plead guilty in December 2013 to distributing oxycodone, a powerful prescription pain killer. Lindsay admitted that on April 10, 2013, she sold several oxycodone pills to a confidential informant (CI) who was working with the Beckley Police Department Drug Unit. The drug deal took place at a restaurant located on S. Eisenhower Drive, Beckley.

This case was prosecuted as part of an ongoing effort led by the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of West Virginia to combat the illicit sale and misuse of prescription drugs and heroin. The United States Attorney's Office, joined by federal, state and local law enforcement agencies, is committed to aggressively pursuing and shutting down illegal pill trafficking, eliminating open air drug markets, and curtailing the spread of opiate painkillers and heroin.

BECKLEY– Amber Green, age 33, was sentenced today in Beckley, West Virginia, by United States District Court Judge Irene C. Berger to five months imprisonment, and a three year term of supervised release. Lindsay previously plead guilty in November of 2013 to distributing oxycodone, a powerful prescription pain killer. Lindsay admitted that on April 24, 2013, she sold several oxycodone pills to a confidential informant (CI) who was working with the Beckley Police Department Drug Unit and the Raleigh County Sheriff's Department. The drug deal took place at a residence on Wildwood Avenue, Beckley.

This case was prosecuted as part of an ongoing effort led by the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of West Virginia to combat the illicit sale and misuse of prescription drugs and heroin. The United States Attorney's Office, joined by federal, state and local law enforcement agencies, is committed to aggressively pursuing and shutting down illegal pill trafficking, eliminating open air drug markets, and curtailing the spread of opiate painkillers and heroin.

BECKLEY – Rachel Saunders, 32, was sentenced today in Beckley, West Virginia, by United States District Court Judge Irene C. Berger to three years of probation, and 100 hours of community service. Saunders previously plead guilty in November of 2013 to distributing oxycodone, a powerful and addictive prescription pain killer. Saunders admitted that on March 26, 2013, she sold several oxycodone pills to a confidential informant (CI) who was working with the Beckley Police Department Drug Unit and the Raleigh County Sheriff's Department. The drug deal took place at a local video lottery establishment on North Eisenhower Drive, Beckley.

This case was prosecuted as part of an ongoing effort led by the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of West Virginia to combat the illicit sale and misuse of prescription drugs and heroin. The United States Attorney's Office, joined by federal, state and local law enforcement agencies, is committed to aggressively pursuing and shutting down illegal pill trafficking, eliminating open air drug markets, and curtailing the spread of opiate painkillers and heroin.

3/27/14

(8)

MERCER COUNTY (WVVA) - A former Mercer County magistrate is being called an "embarrassment to the robe" after a formal investigation.

Former magistrate Rick Fowler has been publicly admonished by a commission under West Virginia's Supreme Court.

Fowler has been under investigation since September 2013 after inappropriate messages between him and another woman became public.

These documents detail how that woman and her boyfriend appeared before Fowler in court.

The allegations say Fowler tried to persuade the woman to let her boyfriend sit in jail for ten days.

The Judicial Investigation Commission has found probable cause that Fowler violated multiple parts of the code of judicial conduct.

Fowler was also publicly admonished in 2012 after becoming involved with a man's wife.

That couple also appeared before him in court, and the man tells us he could not be more relieved to see Fowler out of office.

"I'm ecstatic," said Danny Griffith. "In 2012 a very similar incident happened about me. Mr. Fowler and my then wife were having an affair. I'm very ecstatic that justice has finally prevailed. And hopefully this won't happen to anyone else."

While the commission says their findings support formal charges being brought against Fowler, they say that the public is now "protected" because he resigned and will never again seek public office.

Commission chairperson, Ronald E. Wilson, wrote that Fowler's "use of position as a means to satisfy his personal desires was more than fool hardy and humiliating; it was a blatant abuse of power." Also saying Fowler's behavior shows he lacks the "dignity and character to be a judge."

The commission says they are reserving the right to reopen these allegations if Fowler tries to run for a public office seat again.

3/31/14

(2)

BECKLEY (NEWS RELEASE) – On April 1, 2014, a month long drive for the collection of items for youth in foster care will kick-off in tribute of April's Child Abuse Prevention month.

U.S. Attorney Booth Goodwin, along with representatives from Mission West Virginia, Inc., and Concord University students and faculty will gather on Tuesday, April 1, 2014, at 11 a.m. at the Erma Byrd Higher Education Center to initiate the drive. Items will be collected for the Carry – On Campaign, a state-wide initiative to provide luggage for youth in foster care.

Collection boxes will be set up in the lobby of the Center and area residents are encouraged to drop off donations throughout the month. Needed care items for the bags include: toothbrushes and paste; flip flops; small new stuffed animals; journals; school supplies; coloring books; crayons; flashlights; pillow cases and toiletries.

All items collected will be distributed to foster care agencies and DHHR county offices in the southern region of West Virginia. There are approximately 4,000 children in West Virginia's foster care system who, when they are displaced, often have to carry their belongings in trash bags.

The Carry On Campaign began in October 2010 as a collaborative, multi-agency partnership that includes the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of West Virginia, the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, Mission West Virginia, Inc. and the West Virginia Prosecuting Attorney's Institute.

To donate new or gently used luggage please contact Mission West Virginia at 866-CALL-MWV. For more information about this drive, contact Lori Pace by emailing lp@concord.edu or calling 304-763-5396.

Network Programming



In addition to our locally produced programming specifically designed to respond to the problems and needs of our viewing area, network programs often cover issues relating to our local problems and needs.

The following are selected episodes of regular programs and specials, which, in our judgment, contribute to serving the problems and needs of our community. Highlights of topics and issues televised this quarter are detailed.

TODAY SHOW

Monday-Friday	7:00-11:00 am (240 minutes)
Saturday	7:00-9:00 am (120 minutes)
Sunday	8:00-9:00 am (60 minutes)

Nightly News

Monday-Friday	6:30-7:00 pm (30 minutes)
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DATELINE

Friday	9:00-9:30 (60 minutes)
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MEET THE PRESS

Sunday	11:00-12:00 (60 minutes)
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THE DOCTORS

Monday-Friday	4:00-5:00 pm (60 minutes)
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DR. PHIL

Monday-Friday 3:00-4:00 pm (60 minutes)

CW-The Daily Buzz (EVVA)

Monday-Friday 6:00-7:30 am (90 minutes)

Short Form Programming



Short Form Programming provides an opportunity to local organizations to get their message out to the community. We produced ten to thirty second commercials for anything from job fairs, to tips for a healthier life, even finding the right doctor for you in our area. We also support our local foundations that raise awareness for childhood cancer, breast cancer, babies born premature, and any health concerns affecting our local area. WVVA also organizes its own events, like urging people in our community to work towards a healthier lifestyle, while producing segments that help take fugitives of the streets, and recognizing veterans and active military personnel that have fought or are fighting for our country.

Special Services Provided for Community



CLOSED CAPTIONING

During the quarter, WVVA-TV Closed Captioning regularly scheduled newscasts per day Monday-Friday 5:30 am, Monday-Friday 7:25 am, 7:55 am, 8:25 am, 8:55 am; Mon.-Fri. 6:00 pm; Mon.-Sun. 11:00 pm. This allows hearing-impaired viewers, with the proper decoding devices, the opportunity to read, in printed text form, on the bottom of their television screen, the information presented on the audio portion of the news

broadcast. WVVA-TV offers this area's only closed Captioning local news programming.

School Visits by the Weather Team

Princeton Primary

Mount View

Lashmeet/Matoaka

Memorial Primary

Sun Valley

National Read to me day

Talcott

Rupert

Dudley Primary