

## AT THURSDAY MEETING

## Sullivan commissioners could approve opioid funds for nonprofits

ROBERT SORRELL  
BRISTOL HERALD COURIER

The Sullivan County Commission on Thursday may approve a plan to allocate almost a half million dollars in opioid abatement trust funds to three area nonprofit organizations.

Commissioners will vote on a resolution to allocate \$206,013.20 to Recovery Resources TN; \$167,213.20 to Bridge to Shore Recovery Organization; and \$80,000 to Families Free Inc., according to Commissioner Joyce Crosswhite, the resolution's sponsor.

The county had received a total of \$735,949.15 on Feb. 28, 2023, from the Opioid Abatement Trust Fund, which comes from the proceeds from lawsuits against opioid manufacturers, distributors and pharmacies negotiated by the Tennessee Attorney General's Office.

Sullivan County, which created an opioid advisory committee, has to obligate the funds for specific purposes within a two-year time frame from date of receipt, according to the resolution.

Crosswhite said the committee

met with representatives from three nonprofit organizations about the funding.

"We interviewed them and they are more than qualified to handle this money," Crosswhite said.

The three organizations are based in the Tri-Cities area and each assists residents from Sullivan County.

"This is to help people that are coming out and trying to get them off of these drugs and get them back to being citizens and supporting their families and helping them any way we can," Crosswhite

said.

Sullivan County Mayor Richard Venable told commissioners during their work session on Sept. 12 that the organizations are also hoping to set up sites in the county. He noted that the three organizations are approved through the Attorney General's Office.

Crosswhite is seeking to have the resolution approved on first reading during Thursday's commission meeting, which will be held at the Sullivan County Courthouse. Judge James Good-

win and representatives from the three organizations are scheduled to attend the meeting.

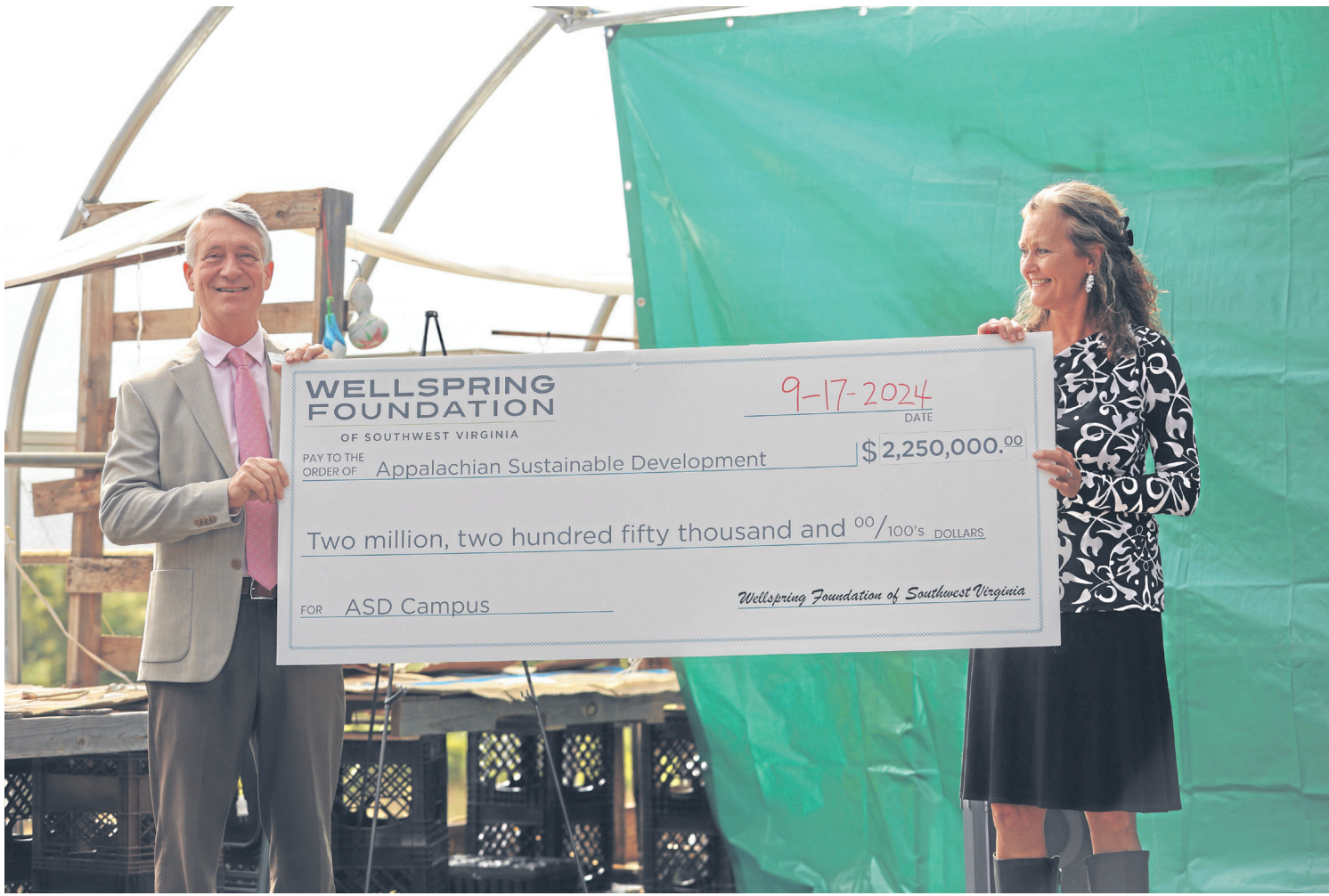
"We've got the money," Crosswhite said. "We are going to try and help our citizens."

The remaining funds in the account will be held in the county's general fund until the committee determines additional uses, according to Sullivan County Finance Director Larry Bailey.

"If we can help one person get off of drugs, then we've done our job," Crosswhite said.

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## FROM WELLSPRING FOUNDATION



EMILY BALL PHOTOS, BRISTOL HERALD COURIER

Appalachian Sustainable Development CEO, Kathlyn Terry Baker, right, smiles to Wellspring Foundation of Southwest Virginia Executive Director Sean McMurray, right, after revealing the \$2.25 million grant check Tuesday morning.

## Appalachian Sustainable Development receives \$2.25 million grant

JOAQUIN MANCERA  
BRISTOL HERALD COURIER

BRISTOL, Va. — Appalachian Sustainable Development (ASD) received a \$2.25 million IMPACT grant award from the Wellspring Foundation of Southwest Virginia.

Kathlyn Terry Baker, the Chief Executive Officer for ASD, emphasized that the IMPACT grant allows them to take the first big step in building ASD's innovative 17-acre agriculture campus in Bristol, Virginia.

"What I find exciting about this day is that Wellspring has enabled us to actually take the first big step for this campus," Baker said. "It's also, in my opinion, exciting for our community, for what this is going to represent for building an ag campus that showcases what agriculture does for our region and can do for our region."

In his remarks during the check presentation event on Wednesday, Sean McMurray, executive director of the Wellspring Foundation of Southwest Virginia, highlighted that ASD's agriculture campus project will have a transformational impact in communities across Southwest Virginia and Northeast Tennessee.

"Our mission is to enhance the health and wellbeing of the

Virginia residents of four counties, Washington County and the adjacent counties of Russell, Smith and Grayson," McMurray said. "This project checks all the boxes for us at Wellspring Foundation, what's not to love about it."

"The work Appalachian sustainable development does in supporting our region's food and agricultural system is tremendous," added McMurray. "They're truly propelling our region forward into the future."

The ASD agriculture campus, which is located at 17444 Singing Wood Lane, immediately off Interstate I-81, will be built in three phases and will cost an estimated \$14 million.

Baker explained that the first phase of the project, funded in large part by the Wellspring Foundation's generous grant, will be the construction of critical campus infrastructure and the construction of ASD's second food hub.

"It's going to be the roads, the utilities, the water, a lot of that stuff that's invisible and not very fun and not super exciting will be first," Baker said. "The food hub will be after that."

The next step for ASD over the coming months will be to get in contact with an architecture firm to begin designing the food hub



Wellspring Foundation of Southwest Virginia Executive Director Sean McMurray speaks during the \$2.25 million check presentation ceremony to Appalachian Sustainable Development on Tuesday morning.



Appalachian Sustainable Development CEO, Kathlyn Terry Baker, right, speaks during the check presentation ceremony where Wellspring Foundation of Southwest Virginia gifted them a grant of \$2.25 million.

and, weather permitting, start site development.

"We are going to start looking for an architectural firm ASAP," Baker said. "My concern is that

it is September, so winter is coming, it might mean that the site development might be slow, but as soon as we can get started, we will."

## Bristol Virginia man faces multiple charges following break-in

BRISTOL HERALD COURIER

A Bristol Virginia man was arrested Sept. 17 after the search for him prompted two schools to be locked down.

Jedidiah Campbell, 36, of Bristol Virginia, was charged with possession of methamphetamine, possession of ammunition by a convicted felon, assault and battery of a family member and possession of controlled drug paraphernalia, according to a written statement.

On Tuesday afternoon around 4 p.m., police received a "be on lookout" notice for a subject who had reportedly broken into a residence and stolen firearms.

The suspect's vehicle was located at Ridgecrest Apartments on Heritage Drive, near I-81's Exit 7 and the driver was believed to be out on foot.

A search then began in the surrounding neighborhoods. Because the search area was near Virginia Intermediate and Primary schools, both were notified and placed on temporary lockdown.

After nearly an hour of searching, the suspect did appear on the grounds of the two schools and was taken into custody without incident.

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Campbell

## Motorcyclist dies following two-vehicle Smyth County crash

BRISTOL HERALD COURIER

Virginia State Police are investigating a fatal crash involving a motorcycle that occurred Sept. 15.

The driver of the motorcycle, Jessie R. Bragg, 33, of Shady Spring, W. Va., was transported to Smyth County Community Hospital where he later succumbed to his injuries. He was wearing a helmet, according to a written statement.

The crash occurred at 4:10 p.m., at the exit 39 northbound off-ramp of Interstate 81 in Smyth County.

A 2024 Suzuki GSXR exited Interstate 81 northbound and failed to stop at the stop sign at the end of the ramp and the intersection with Route 11. The GSXR then struck the side of a 2002 Mercedes 320 that was heading northbound on Route 11.

The driver of the Mercedes was not injured.

The crash remains under investigation.

## PLANNING FOR 250TH

## Abingdon leaders look ahead to 2026 historic anniversary

JOE TENNIS  
BRISTOL HERALD COURIER

Abingdon town officials are looking forward to 2026.

That's both the 250th anniversary of the country and the county of Washington in Virginia, where Abingdon is the courthouse town.

"We're going to do a Virginia 250 Festival in 2026," said Mayana Rice, the town's assis-

tant town manager, at the Sept. 9 meeting of the Abingdon Town Council.

"Abingdon's history is America's history," Rice said.

Both the Virginia Creeper Trail and the Barter Theatre are noted as the town's top attractions, Rice said.

But more components can be added, such as improving the Muster Grounds off Colonial

Road at the head of the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail, Rice said.

This trail starts at both Abingdon and Elkin, North Carolina, and follows to Kings Mountain on the North Carolina-South Carolina border, where a battle was won by American patriots in the Revolutionary War.

"We are the spot where it started," Rice said. "So, what we

would like to do with this grant is we're looking for basically \$50,000 in grant dollars."

That grant would also require a \$25,000 match by the town and \$25,000 in in-kind support, according to Rice.

Abingdon Town Council voted unanimously on a resolution to support the town's application for a Virginia Tobacco Commission grant to support Abingdon's

Historic Cultural Tourism Strategic Plan.

"What Abingdon has is history, and we all know that," Rice said. "And we have that authentic, preserved history where other people have tried to recreate it."

Expanding the tourism base can help keep taxes low, Rice told the town council.

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