

WEEKLY UPDATE

June 22nd – June 26th, 2020



NEWS & NOTES

COVID-19:

Due to significant outbreaks in popular vacation areas which could impact our workforce, the following email was sent to executive staff for distribution to their respective employees:

Several staff members have inquired about the COVID outbreaks in popular vacation spots, how that impacts our work environment, and what precautions should be taken with those returning. First, I think it important to keep our workers and customers safe from the spread of COVID and strive that nobody gets sick by simply coming to work. However, I do not think a 2 week quarantine is necessary; but am urging additional precautions for the who are returning from vacations outside of Virginia. Those precautions are:

- *Employees who are physically returning to work should take their temperature on a daily basis and report it to their immediate supervisor.*
- *Seeking out a COVID test is encouraged.*
- *If a vacationing employee physically returns to work, he/she should wear a mask for a minimum of 2 work weeks.*
- *It is encouraged to look for opportunities for a returning employee to work from home in a telework capacity.*
- *Employees should monitor their health and should **not** come to work if they feel sick. If feeling sick, he/she should immediately consult their physician, use sick leave, and not return to work until released to do so.*
- *If an employee actually has a documented case of COVID or documented interaction with a COVID positive individual, then he/she should use the 14 days of paid leave being offered per the attached policy statement and form.*

Please be aware that these guidelines and precautions may change and become more (or less) restrictive as further information is received from the Virginia Department of Health. Please continue to be diligent and safe in your travels, not only when on vacation, but within our region and state.

Nursing Home:

BCNH continues to follow recommendations of CDC, CMS and VDH and strictly adheres to our COVID-19 Policy. After receiving the test results from the Virginia National Guard mass testing event on June 18th, the facility still has no COVID-19 cases of residents. However, one staff member did test positive. The good news is this employee is doing well and has been quarantined since June 15th due to her husband testing positive.

We are prepared and will begin our weekly testing of all residents and staff starting 6/29/20. Staff has established a separate unit with 8 beds (closed off from the rest of the facility) to utilize in the event there are any future positive cases. This unit has already been used for residents returning from any hospital stays. We

continue to operate with no staffing concerns or supply shortages and are compliant with our weekly reporting of CDC requirements. We are preparing to re-open once final guidance is given by VDH and CMS.

Economic Development:

PPE Grant available from the EDA - The Economic Development Authority is providing up to \$300 in grant funds to local companies (for profit and non-profit) that have had to purchase PPE and cleaning supplies related to the COVID-19 crisis. Requests for reimbursement are handled on a first-come, first-served basis until the \$5,000 allocation is exhausted. To date, seven businesses have submitted requests with receipts totaling a combined \$1,766.65.



New London Shell building nears completion - The shell building in New London Business & Technology Center park is continues to show progress. In the coming few weeks, the brick and stone work will be completed and the doors and trim will be installed. A digital ad campaign targeting site selectors will launch in August and will feature the building as one part of the program.

Burnbridge Road sewer project update - Staff along with Doyle Allen from Hurt & Proffitt, and Rhonda English from BRWA met with property owners about the latest plans for the Burnbridge Road sewer project. Although the project will take an alternate route due to one property owner not willing to provide an easement, the remaining property owners are in agreement to proceed with the project, though it will cost them more out of pocket for installation of a sewer pump and associated piping. BRWA will meet with VDOT to ensure use of its right-of-way for this project, and then Hurt & Proffitt can proceed with the design phase of the alternate route.

Tourism:

Tourism, Economic Development, and County Administration met this week to discuss the establishment of Tourism Zone(s) in the County. We will continue to research how others have implemented these zones with the goal of bringing a solution for consideration this fall. Establishment of such an incentive area will be a boost to our local COVID economic recovery efforts and strategically aide in development of parcels that could be tourism related businesses in the future.

Blue Ridge Country magazine's "Mountain Blue" reader poll has been tabulated for 2020. With 6,500+ votes cast, the winners were chosen by the readers. Nominees from each of the coverage states (VA, WV, KY, TN, NC, SC, GA) were compiled by the editors based on extensive research and internet feedback. The winners will be featured in the July/August issue of Blue Ridge Country, dubbed the "Blue Issue".

Bedford County will be recognized in the following categories:

Platinum: Best Lake in Virginia: Smith Mountain Lake

Gold: Best Water-Related State Park in Virginia: Smith Mountain Lake State Park

Platinum: Best Waterfront Hotel/Resort: Peaks of Otter Lodge

About Blue Ridge Country magazine: Published six times per year, Blue Ridge Country magazine is celebrating 32 years of covering the mountain region of the south which includes VA, WV, KY, TN, NC, SC & GA. Blue Ridge Country has 30,000 paid subscribers who are affluent, educated, and frequent travelers. The magazine can be found at 3,900+ newsstand locations mostly across the mid-Atlantic and Southeast. To be recognized by this audience is absolutely something to be proud of.

The Peaks of Otter Lodge and Restaurant reopened to the public on June 24th.

Info Technology:

Staff is piloting an automated temperature sensor solution in Nursing Home Facility. Next week, we will determine whether this is a useful device for our purposes.

We received 104 responses from county employees to the IT Survey on assessing the County's virtual meeting capabilities. The average response to usability of meeting locations for virtual meetings was a 3.82 out of 5. As a result, the IT Team is in the process of identifying training and tools to improve the County's virtual work capabilities and infrastructure.

Leesville Lake:

I went a tour of Leesville Lake to view the amount of debris and other challenges in this body of water. In my discussions with a couple members of the Leesville Lake Association, it is apparent that AEP is not living up to their debris management plan that has been filed and approved by FERC. Specifically, for two years, the Association has been waiting on answers to the following: 1) Pigg River Collection/Diversion study, 2) Alternative off-loading debris site evaluation, and 3) Additional equipment feasibility study. I plan to reach out to AEP representatives and voice my concerns about this lack of action and request a respond these matters by bringing these studies and evaluations to a conclusion.

FOLLOW-UP FROM PREVIOUS BOARD MEETINGS

Dog Tags:

Kim Snow and I met with Bart Warner this week. The Town simply does not desire to manage their dog tags any longer. Per Patrick's research, the reversion agreement is silent on this matter and State code only contemplates that Counties and Cities must provide dog licensing. Bart did offer that the Town will cover the expense for this year's actual dog tags and any other office supply related expenses. Therefore, we will

proceed with planning for this conversion. However, we must have IT staff examine our existing dog licensing program to determine if it can accept a system change such as this. As you heard Monday night, we are not scheduled to migrate to the MUNIS program until next spring. If everything goes well, we will include the Town residents in the dog tag renewal period starting in November. If we cannot make the necessary changes in the current software program, we will notify the Town and see how they want to proceed.

Broadband:

After some more research and clarification, there is no need for a new easement for fiber to the New London tower because it can be run using existing easements. The BRT and the subcontractor have been notified to proceed.