

REGION

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PAGE 8A

AROUND THE REGION



PARKERSBURG

Spencer, Vienna given federal funds

The cities of Spencer and Vienna have received funds through the Department of Justice Community Oriented Policing Services Hiring Program.

Vienna has received \$125,000 and Spencer has received \$72,664.

The funding supports hiring or rehiring law enforcement officers to increase community policing capacities and crime prevention efforts.

The grants will provide 75 percent funding for approved entry-level salaries and benefits for three years for newly-hired, full-time positions or for rehired officers who have been laid off, or are scheduled to be laid off on a future date. Priority was given to agencies that requested support to hire school resource officers, build trust between the police force and its community, hire military veterans, focus on homicide or gun violence, designate an area as a Promise Zone to enhance economic development, or assist an area that experienced an unanticipated catastrophic event.

Agencies in West Virginia received \$569,569. Also receiving grants were the city of Fairmont at \$250,000 and the Dunbar Police Department at \$121,905.

Emerson Avenue set to be paved

Lanes of West Virginia 68, known locally as Emerson Avenue, will be closed beginning today for street resurfacing, said the West Virginia Division of Highways.

Paving will take place along Emerson Avenue from the junction with Wood County 2/7, known locally as Bull Creek Road, and ending just south of the junction with Wood County 4/6, known locally as Upper Big Run Road and Jester-ville Road.

Work is expected from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. seven days a week until Oct. 31, the DOH said.

MARIETTA

Mugrage sentenced for drug trafficking

A Marietta man was sentenced in Washington County Common Pleas Court Monday to a month in jail and three years of community control for trafficking in drugs.

Danny E. Mugrage, 54, of 1023 Third St., Marietta, was sentenced by Common Pleas Court Judge Randall Burnworth on a fourth-degree felony count of trafficking in drugs after he sold hydrocodone to a confidential informant on Sept. 13, 2013.

Mugrage accepted the drug buy money from the informant and produced 10 hydrocodone pills during the transaction, officials said.

Burnworth sentenced Mugrage to pay court costs and revoked his driver's license for 180 days after his community control ends.

VIENNA

Festival meeting slated for Nov. 19

The Mid-Ohio Valley Multi-Cultural Festival will hold its annual meeting 6-8 p.m. Nov. 19 at Panera Bread at the Grand Central Mall.

A board member will be selected. Volunteers and organizers are needed.

For more information, call Jessica Duckworth at 304-615-6826.

— Staff reports



Wood County commissioners Wayne Dunn, Steve Gainer and Blair Couch look over proposed changes in land use regulations relating to stormwater drain requirements.

Commissioners OK land use reg changes

Stormwater drains to be made safer for bike riders

By PAMELA BRUST
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PARKERSBURG — Wood County commissioners approved changes recommended in land use regulations that will affect stormwater drain requirements.

The proposal for the change, which officials hope will make the drains safer for bike riders, originally came from the Alternative Transportation Council. The recommendations were presented to the Wood County Planning Commission approved and recommended them to the county commission.

"It's a safety thing, we've already had several incidents because of the openings in the stormwater grates," commission President Wayne Dunn said.

County officials noted the changes approved Monday will

only affect new developments, they will not apply to existing subdivisions in the county.

"It would be very expensive to go back, although maybe warning signage for bikers might be a wise consideration as a point of discussion in the existing developments," Dunn said. "This change is a good safety approach."

The approved changes in the regulations requires stormwater drainage grates and utility covers installed in any new subdivision in locations "where bicycles may be present to be bicycle-compatible and installed flush with the road surface (within a quarter inch)." In addition, the elevation change in swales around these drainage grates "shall not be a hazard to cyclists."

Bicycle-compatible drainage

grates have bars that are perpendicular to the traffic direction. Drainage grates with gaps longer than 4 inches in the direction of travel would not be permitted under the approved changes.

Wood County Administrator Marty Seufer said the changes were based on a federal guideline.

County officials noted several recent accidents with injuries involving bicycle riders and the grates.

Kim Coram, coordinator for the newly organized transportation council told county commissioners during an earlier meeting there was an incident in early August involving a biker and a storm grate and plans relating to standards for grate installation to ensure they are stroller and bike-friendly were underway at that time.

WVU Mountaineer fires kids up about reading

By BRETT DUNLAP
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PARKERSBURG — The West Virginia University Mountaineer got students and parents at Franklin Elementary School excited about the idea of reading together Monday evening.

The school held a parents night at the school. Many students and parents wore WVU attire and chanted "Let's Go Mountaineers" before WVU's mascot Michael Garcia came in sporting his Mountaineer garb.

This is Garcia's second visit to Franklin, the first of which was right before the WESTEST was done in April when he read to students in many classrooms.

Garcia is the son of Franklin Title-One teacher Kelly Garcia.

Mrs. Garcia showed slides highlighting the importance of her family reading together, including Michael, through the years. She showed other Franklin teachers reading with



The West Virginia University Mountaineer mascot Michael Garcia greets students and parents at Franklin Elementary School during a parents night event Monday at the school.

their kids.

Reading together is important because it stimulates a child's imagination; helps develop an interest in reading and in books; develops their vocabulary as parents read new words to their children; helps them understand

stories and book language; reading helps create a bond between the child and family members; and provides a child with a positive role model, Mrs. Garcia said.

■ SEE MOUNTAINEER, PAGE 9A

Health Department sprinklers to be repaired

Commission approves project

By PAMELA BRUST
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PARKERSBURG — Declaring it an emergency, Wood County commissioners voted Monday to complete repairs on the Mid-Ohio Valley Health Department's sprinkler system.

County Maintenance Superintendent Melvin Swiger told the commissioners he had gotten two cost quotes for the work: \$28,585 from SimplexGrinnell and \$17,600 from Brewer and Co., with a possible additional \$5,000 on the Brewer quote for valve replacements.

"The sprinkler system was inspected and apparently was not operating properly, and instead of notifying the county, the state fire marshal was notified and we were made aware of the problem through the fire marshal's office and the Parkersburg Fire Department," County Administrator Marty Seufer

told the commissioners on Monday. "The county was not notified of the problem first, but it has to be fixed."

The commissioners declared the situation to be an emergency. In such an instance, bids are not required, only solicitation of cost quotes for the job.

Commissioner Blair Couch said the department had conducted a mass evacuation drill recently and it went well.

"But we were told it would take up to six minutes for all the sprinklers to become enabled," Couch told his fellow commissioners.

Couch is the commission liaison to the health board and currently serves as board president.

"Apparently the last few feet of the lines is plugged. Rust has built



File Photo

The Mid-Ohio Valley Health Department building, which is owned by the county, needs repairs to its sprinkler system, according to officials.

Commissioner Steve Gainer asked if the health department was going to pay for the project.

"That's our building. We pay for maintenance, and have done so since the 1980s. We have discussed turning over the building to the

up over time," Swiger said.

"We were told if we repair the system we can use the same size pipe, if it's replaced, the next size pipe has to be used," Swiger told the commissioners.

Seufer said the Parkersburg Fire Department had advised the county a "fire walker" was needed to go

throughout the building until the repairs could be completed.

"They have addressed it by using their maintenance department," he said.

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Airport finalizes lawsuit payment

By JOLENE CRAIG
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WILLIAMSTOWN — The lawsuit against the Mid-Ohio Valley Regional Airport is completed following nearly two years of negotiations.

"The payment was made (Monday) and it is all finished," said airport Manager Jeff McDougle. "We are now in the clear."

In August, the Wood County Airport Authority, the managing arm of the airport, announced it had come to an agreement with Mountaineer Grading to keep the suit from going to trial.

The agreement between the airport and construction company saw the company receive \$500,000.

"The money will come from the Federal Aviation Administration and the airport itself," McDougle said.

In November 2012, Mountaineer Grading filed the \$13 million lawsuit in Wood County Circuit Court for breach of contract and the demise of the construction company.

The lawsuit claimed breach of contract for phases three and four of the airport's Runway Area Safety Project.

According to the paperwork, Mountaineer Grading said the airport authority failed to provide "a design free of defects" for several smaller sections within the overall safety project.

The original suit requested \$3 million in payment for the breach of contract and \$10 million for destroying the company.

This lawsuit was filed after the construction company, which began work on the Runway Area Safety Project in August 2006, walked away from the job in August 2011.

Mountaineer Grading had cut back work for several years with as few as three workers on site before the company pulled out all together. After the site had been empty for months, the airport went into lawyer to lawyer discussions with Mountaineer Grading's bonding company, Travelers Insurance, and it was decided the company was in default since it hadn't been at the site in more than a year, at that time.

When the company left, the project was about 95 percent completed with some navigational aids, including the light towers and electric to run them, not working.

Through the agreement with Travelers Insurance that the construction company is liable for the incomplete job, the insurance company agreed to pay a certain amount of money to complete the work.

In August 2012, Rifenberg Construction was hired to finish the job, but issues arose and the project remains incomplete.

This August, Jess Howard Electric Co. from Blacklick, Ohio, became the third contractor to tackle the project.

The project includes the creation of a 500-foot safety area on either end of the runway along with light towers to extend the visual of the runway by 2,400 feet. The lights, when activated, will give pilots a visual for approach and landing that is currently not available after dark, McDougle said.

McDougle said the lawsuit was completed when all aspects have been fulfilled by both parties, which meant the payment was made and nothing more remains between the two entities.

During the August board meeting, president and local attorney Bill Richardson said the airport received the funds to pay the agreed upon amount through Airport Improvement Funds and the Federal Aviation Administration.

health department in the past, but that never happened," Couch said.

The health department headquarters are at 211 Sixth St., Parkersburg.

Seufer said a previous agreement that prohibited the county from turning the building over.

"That agreement has since expired," he said.

"They (the health department) doesn't have the financial where-withal right now to do it, they have some funds, and have been looking at potential sites to move to," Couch said.

Nothing had come to fruition, he said.

"The county doesn't give the health department nearly as much in funding as other counties do. We give our department about \$90,000; Kanawha County, for example, gives their health department over a million dollars every year," Couch said.

The commissioners unanimously voted to accept the quote from Brewer and said the funds to pay for it will be taken from capital outlay.