

# The WV INDEPENDENT Observer

JEFFERSON COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA

SEPTEMBER 2024

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// LOCAL STORIES

# SHEPHERDSTOWN HAS MAIL

## Post Office Is A Popular Place In Town



YOU'LL NEED A POST OFFICE BOX to get mail if you reside in the Corporation of Shepherdstown, as the Postal Service does not deliver door-to-door within the town limits. That's always been the case, according to Doug Perks of the Jefferson County Museum. Other long-time residents recall there was an informal survey about direct delivery in the late 1990s or early 2000s — and the response overwhelmingly supported keeping the post office box setup.

The current post office building at 300 South King Street was constructed specifically

for USPS and opened in 1961 (image above). The Postal Service rents, rather than owns the property. The property is currently for sale, with the expectation that USPS will renew the current lease when it expires in 2026. USPS has plans to consolidate mail carrier operations (sorting and delivery) to its Martinsburg facility, but it has not announced details or a specific timetable for that shift. The post office boxes and counter services are expected to remain in Shepherdstown, as both of those operations are profitable at this location according to the Post Office.



A change to door-to-door delivery for in-town residences and businesses is not an option at this time. Current postal regulations, as mandated by Congress, require the least-cost method of delivery for any new service, so that would leave cluster boxes (image above) as the only option if the town residents wanted to seek an alternative to the post office boxes. 🗉

### WVU Medicine

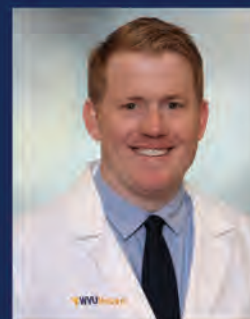
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THIS PAPER WANTS TO BE RECYCLED.



Local farmer drives tractor through downtown Charles Town in June.

**TO OUR READERS** — It's not uncommon to see farm equipment being driven through downtown Charles Town or Shepherdstown, and not just during the County Fair week either. During a recent Board of Zoning Appeals hearing, a local farmer noted that the price of some equipment now exceeds \$1 million. That's a lot of beans — literally. For that level of investment to make sense, a farmer needs a lot of acreage to keep the equipment fully utilized. He also mentioned that the dealers and repair facilities are further away now, so the climate for farming in Jefferson is becoming even more difficult, even before the current drought

That's part of the context for the many concerns and questions about supporting agriculture that have been raised during the many meetings on the county's Comprehensive Plan. We heard even more at the Planning Commission's August 27 public hearing and we'll be reporting next month (and online at ObserverWV.com) on what the public has to say about planning for growth in Jefferson County

If you think you're seeing more campaign signs than usual around the county, you are correct. All of the local seats in the West Virginia House of Delegates and state Senate have multiple candidates running to fill them. At the County level, the incumbent Sheriff, Assessor and Prosecuting Attorney are running unopposed, but the County Commission has a total of four seats on the ballot this fall (see page 6). The new commissioners will have the final say on the county's Comprehensive Plan and will also oversee any updates to the zoning ordinance recommended in that plan. They may serve only for a few years, but the choices they make will affect Jefferson County for decades.



Steve Pearson  
EDITOR IN CHIEF



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// LAND USE

# ANOTHER INDUSTRIAL SOLAR PROJECT

## Use Permit Approved For 500 Acre Franklinton Site

By Steve Pearson

THE JEFFERSON COUNTY BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS approved a “conditional use permit” for the Franklinton Farm industrial solar project on August 22. The proposed project area encompasses approximately 500 acres and the energy generation capacity of the project is listed as 80 megawatts from solar modules, with 20 megawatts of battery storage. The next step for this project is a public workshop during the next regular Jefferson County Planning Commission meeting to review the concept plan. That meeting is scheduled for September 10 at 7:00 pm in the lower level meeting room of the Charles Town Library (200 East Washington St).

Enel North America, the developer of the Franklinton Farm project, is based in Massachusetts. The parent company is Enel Group, which is headquartered in Italy and operates around the globe. According to Fortune Italia, Enel Group’s 2023 revenues were \$148 billion, ranking it as the 59th largest company in the world.

Representatives on hand at the BZA hearing to present the project included Ashley Smith, a lead project designer from Enel, Paul Raco, a local land use consultant, and various technical specialists from Potesta & Associates. According to Smith, the project will include 137,000 tracking panels, with the tops of the panels reaching a height of approximately 18 feet at maximum extension.

Both Smith and Raco described the setbacks at the perimeter of the project and the vegetative screening that would be planted in these setbacks. Smith indicated that very few areas of the site would need grading and Raco made references to enhancements to the stormwater

Proposed location of the new substation to be built for the project.



management plan for the project. However, the materials provided to the BZA did not include specific details on the grading or stormwater management. Many residents who commented during the hearing raised concerns that these important details about grading and stormwater management were just promises until more detail is provided.

Mike Chapman, one of the landowners who will be leasing land for the project described his family’s struggles with maintaining a working farm. According to Chapman, his land his family will be leasing to the solar project constitutes twenty percent of his family’s farmland and the recurring revenue will allow them to continue investing in the expensive equipment needed to operate a viable farm.

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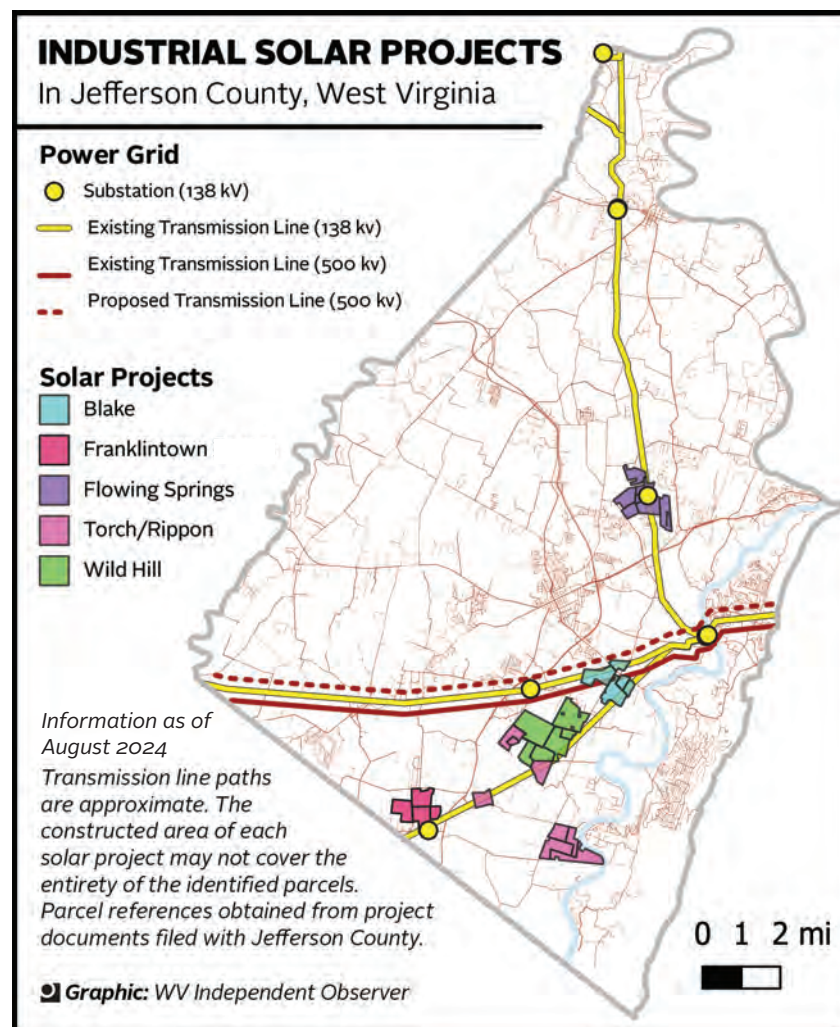
// LAND USE

# Five Projects On The Map

IN JUNE 2022, THE JEFFERSON COUNTY COMMISSION adopted a zoning ordinance amendment to allow industrial solar facilities in the county. Since then, five projects have been proposed. The Blake project (image below) is the only project that has been constructed so far. The Wild Hill project developer requested a tax abatement agreement, which was rejected by the County Commission. The company indicated it would not be moving forward with the Wild Hill project without this tax abatement, but it has not yet formally canceled the project.

At 502 acres, the Franklinton project is similar in size to the 516 acre Blake project. The other projects are larger, with Flowing Springs listed as 660 acres, Wild Hill as 842 acres, and Rippon as 878 acres. The plans for the Flowing Springs project show it being built around the existing Sleepy Hollow substation. All of the other projects show new substations. The location proposed for the new Franklinton substation is at the southern end of the project site, adjacent to the existing Potomac Edison substation on Lewisville Road.

The electric grid operator, PJM Interconnection, has approved both the Franklinton and Flowing Springs projects to connect battery storage. During the BZA hearing for the Franklinton project, Ashley Smith, a project designer from Enel, stated that the company had not yet decided on the specific type of battery, which could either be multiple DC-coupled batteries located throughout the site or a single large AC-coupled battery array located adjacent to the new substation.



### Concerns About Stormwater Runoff

On the Blake project site (image left), the former farmland was heavily graded prior to the installation of the solar panels. The large hill visible on the left side of the image did not exist prior to the construction of the solar project. The runoff from the entire site has been visible in Evitts Run and the Shenandoah River and the company has received numerous violation notices from the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection.

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// ELECTIONS

# A LOOK AT THE NOVEMBER ELECTION

## Entire County Votes On 4 County Commission Seats

THE JEFFERSON COUNTY COMMISSION has five seats, with each commissioner elected to a 6 year term. Each commission seat is associated with one of five “magisterial districts” — Charles Town, Harpers Ferry, Kabetown, Middleway, and Shepherdstown. Each commissioner is elected “at large” and represents the entire county, but the candidates on the ballot must reside in the magisterial district corresponding to the seat for which they are running, and no more than one commissioner can be elected from each magisterial district. This requirement ensures that there is a balance of commissioners from all parts of the county.

The six year terms are staggered and typically there are only one or two commission seats on the general election ballot every other year. Due to multiple vacancies, there are four seats up for a vote on the 2024 ballot. All registered voters residing in Jefferson County can vote for a candidate in each of these 4 races (i.e. each voter gets to vote for 4 commission candidates).

The **Middleway seat** is the only seat that was scheduled to be on the ballot in 2024. Jane Tabb, the currently-serving commissioner elected from this district is retiring after serving

three terms. There are two candidates running to serve the full 6 year term for this seat: Mike Mood (Republican) and Natalie Grantham Friend (Democrat).

Republican candidate Clare Ath was elected to the **Charles Town seat** in 2022, but resigned six months later to move out of the county. Pasha Majdi was appointed to fill this seat at the end of 2023 as a Republican, but he is ineligible to be elected to fill the remaining term because he resides in the Harpers Ferry district. There are three candidates running on the 2024 ballot to fill this seat (4 years remaining): James Walch (Democrat), David Tabb (Mountain), Jack Hefestay (Republican).

The **Harpers Ferry seat** was left vacant after a special judicial panel removed Tricia Jackson from office on May 1 2024 citing “official misconduct and/or neglect of duty.” Jackson was elected in 2020 as a Republican and Kelvin Upson, also a Republican, was appointed temporarily in May to fill the vacancy. Upson was re-appointed in August to fill the seat until November, but he is not a candidate in that election. There are two candidates running to fill this seat (2 years remaining): Pasha Majdi (Republican) and Lanae Johnson (Democrat).

The **Shepherdstown seat** was likewise left vacant after a special judicial panel removed Jennifer Krouse from office on May 1 2024 citing “official misconduct and/or neglect of duty.” Krouse was elected in 2022 as a Republican, but switched her registration to the Mountain Party just before she was removed. James Cook, who registered with the Mountain Party on May 9, was appointed temporarily in May, but he was ineligible to be reappointed in August to fill the seat until November due to the timing of his party registration. There are two candidates running to fill this seat (4 years remaining): Carrie Jane Blessing (Democrat) and Cara Keys (Republican). 🗳️



Steve Stolipher, Republican from Kabetown, was elected in 2020 and his term runs until 2026. As Commission President, a role he has held for 2 years, he sets the Commission agenda.



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// ELECTIONS

# State Delegates & Senators Elected By Districts

**JEFFERSON COUNTY HAS FOUR DELEGATES** in the West Virginia House of Delegates. Voters will see only one delegate district line on the ballot, determined by the district in which the voter resides (see map).

In **House District 97**, which is split with Berkeley County, the Republican candidate is Chris Anders and the Democratic candidate is Lucia Valentine.

In **House District 98**, which represents the southern and central portions of the county (outside of Charles Town), Joe Funkhouser is the Republican candidate and Troy Miller is the Democratic candidate.

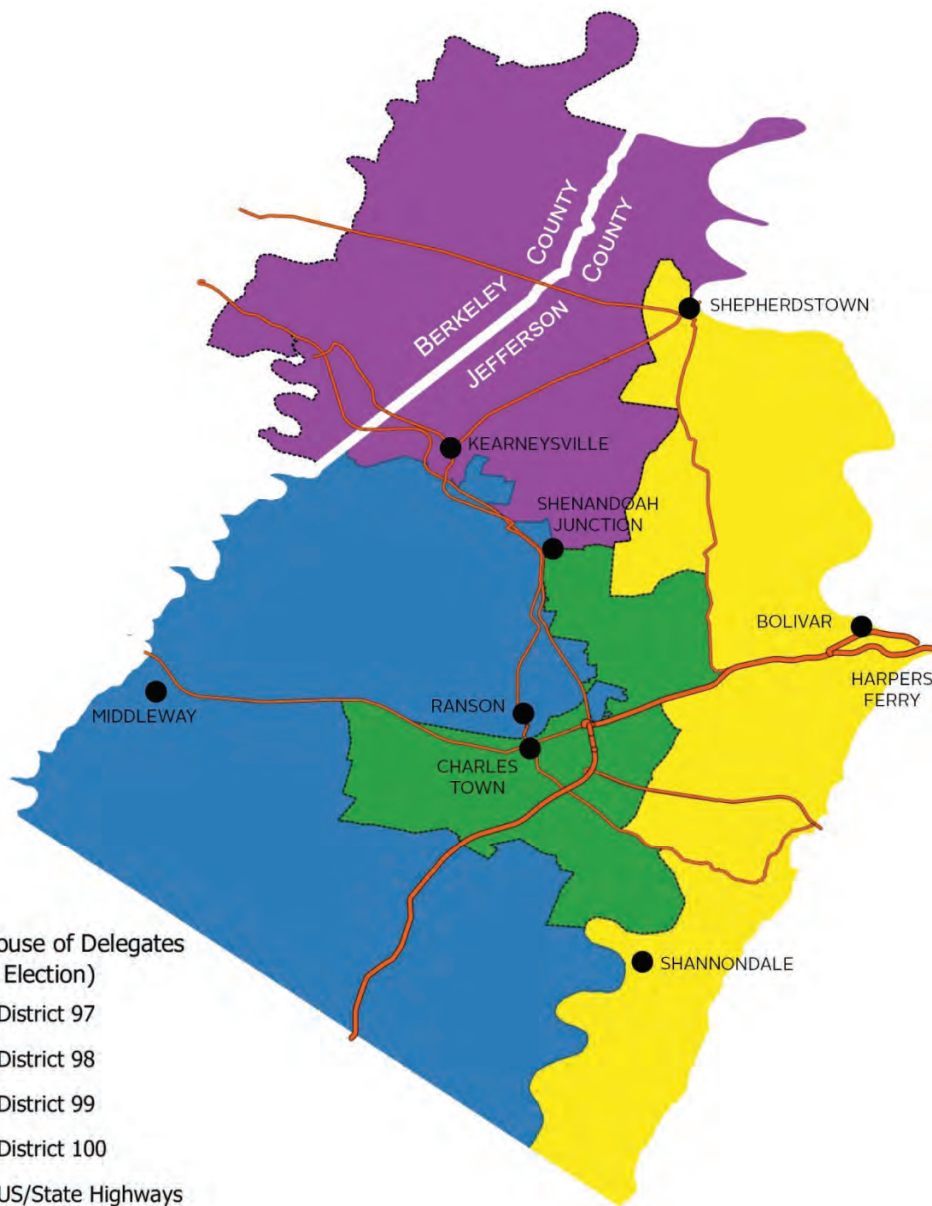
In **House District 99**, which represents Charles Town and Ranson, Wayne Clark, who is currently serving in the legislature, is the Republican candidate and Osmund Anderson is the Democratic candidate.

In **House District 100**, which encompasses Shepherdstown, Bolivar, Harpers Ferry, and the mountain communities, William Ridenour, currently serving in the legislature, is the Republican candidate and Maria Russo is the Democratic Candidate.

### WV Senate Candidates

State Senate District 16 covers all of Jefferson County and roughly half of Berkeley County. The district has two senators, but only one of these seats is on the ballot in 2024. Republican candidate Patricia Rucker is currently serving in the senate and Democratic candidate John Doyle has previously served as a state delegate.

The two senate candidates plan to hold a pair of self-moderated debates featuring a civil discussion about key issues affecting the state. The first debate will take place on October 1 at 7:00 pm in the Byrd Center on the Shepherd University campus (213 North King St).



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// COMMUNITY

# NEW STATE LAW ALLOWS GUNS ON CAMPUS

## Shepherd University Prepared With New Policies

By Lee W Doty

Co-founder, Jefferson County WV Chapter of the Brady Campaign to End Gun Violence

THIS FALL, WEST VIRGINIA STATE COLLEGES and universities must be in compliance with a new state law that prohibits them from restricting individuals from carrying concealed firearms on campus. The Observer asked Lee Doty, a published author and gun safety volunteer based in Shepherdstown, to report on the new law and its impact to date on Shepherd University.

*“I grew up with guns, but this law creates more problems than it solves.”* — Paul Teter.

*“I’m just trying to understand this law. Why bring a danger onto campus?”* — Taylor Beam

The quotes above are from two Shepherd University students commenting on the Campus Self-Defense Act (CSDA), a West Virginia law that went into effect July 1, 2024.

### What is the CSDA?

Previously, state law was interpreted to allow Shepherd and other public institutions of higher education to restrict the concealed and open carry of firearms on their property. Now, any person with a valid West Virginia license (or, for 18-to-21-year-olds, a provisional license) may carry a concealed pistol or revolver onto Shepherd’s campus and in its buildings. In passing the law in 2023, West Virginia joined 11 other states with similar laws.



Secure gun lockers in Moler Hall.

### Exceptions and Compliance

The CSDA doesn’t affect Shepherd’s prohibition of open carry on campus. Nor does it apply to spaces at Shepherd rented exclusively and full-time by a private party. The law identifies twelve locations where Shepherd may still regulate possession of a concealed pistol or revolver. The list includes dorm rooms, day care facilities, patient care areas, stadiums or arenas with a seating capacity of over 1000, and locations for private functions.

Shepherd’s Board of Governors authorized the administration, under the leadership of Holly Morgan Frye, Vice President for Student Affairs/Director of Community Relations, to develop policies designating essentially all twelve allowed locations as restricted zone areas. For example, firearms, concealed or not, will be prohibited at Ram Stadium and Butcher Center Arena. To aid with enforcement, with minor exceptions, only clear plastic bags no larger than 12” by 12” by 6” will be allowed in those locations.

Regarding functions held by private parties on campus, their contact person at Shepherd will provide guidance on any new applicable CSDA policies. Enforcing gun restrictions during the function will rest with the private party.

Costs for implementation of the new law are exceeding seven figures at some institutions. The CSDA does not provide funding for its implementation. For example, one costly CSDA-related compliance step that Shepherd and other institutions have taken is to provide secure gun storage for residents on campus. Frye says that Shepherd has retrofitted a room in Moler Hall and installed lockers and cameras for safe gun storage. Each locker requires a combination to open and to access the room itself. The lockers will be available 24 hours a day to those who rent them.

### Why a Campus Carry Law?

The CSDA has sparked heated protest from colleges and universities, law enforcement,

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faculty members, students, and parents. At a public hearing prior to its passage, 40 individuals testified before the WV House Judiciary Committee and only 2 spoke in favor.

Arguments in favor of guns on campus fall primarily under three headings: The Second Amendment requires it, students will be safer with a gun, and West Virginia law already permits open and concealed carry everywhere.

The Second Amendment has been interpreted by courts more broadly in recent years, but it is still not an absolute right to keep and bear arms. West Virginia law prohibits guns in a number of so-called sensitive areas, including the state capitol complex, courts of law, and lower-level schools, for example.

The argument that armed students will be safer is also questionable. To qualify for a license to carry deadly weapons as the CSDA requires, a person must undergo training to shoot a handgun, but there's no requirement that the person be trained to shoot in an emergency situation. Unless students have worked in law enforcement or the military, they're unlikely to have shot a person before, let alone a menacing one. The license provision doesn't even require that trainees shoot well, just that they can "handle and fire" the handgun.

The third argument, that West Virginia law already allows concealed and open carry, is misleading. Prior to passage of the CSDA, institutions had the legal authority under WV Code 61-7-14(c) to prohibit firearms on campus, both concealed and open carry. Shepherd will continue to enforce restrictions on open carry and any improper concealed carry under this same provision.

**Views from Campus**

According to Shepherd's President of the Student Government Association and member of Shepherd's Board of Governors Paul Teter, most Shepherd students appear to be against the law. "More mental health resources and more security infrastructure are better for preventing gun violence on a college campus," Teter noted. But he was grateful Shepherd was prompt in developing its response to the new requirements. "The university went full force getting ready for implementation by forming the Campus Security Task Force to develop and implement policies and procedures and to address concerns." He said Shepherd hosted meetings and town halls with Q&A sessions. He referenced the Stubblefield Institute for Civil Political Communications, located at Shepherd, which hosted campus conversations where all perspectives could be heard.

Taylor Beam, a Shepherd senior majoring in English Literature and Global

Studies, and also the senior class president, says the reaction to CSDA has been overwhelmingly negative. "More guns lead to more shootings. We need to look for other ways to de-escalate. We need to cultivate a community where we can keep each other safe." Hearing that West Virginia State Senator Rupert Phillips introduced the bill that became the CSDA in part to help women defend themselves against rape, Beam said, "Arming women won't ever solve that deep-rooted problem. Besides, the guy could have a gun too."

Faculty mentioned the specter of gun-packing students might cause some to avoid controversial topics in class, discontinue one-on-one meetings, or inflate grades to head off confrontation, but they don't expect that to happen at Shepherd. They do worry the atmosphere for learning could change.

"We didn't need this," says Heidi Hanrahan, Professor of English. Mass shootings are not her biggest worry —it's students' mental health. While she expressed full confidence in the team of mental health experts and other professionals on campus, she felt the needs of students have increased in the last few years. "Add to that alcohol and drugs, and now firearms at hand — deaths could result."

Another faculty member who chose to remain anonymous echoed Hanrahan's concerns. "I've had [students] break down and cry in my office. Some have full-time jobs and full-time course loads. Their worries can overwhelm them. Access to a gun in these circumstances is dangerous."

**Looking Ahead**

With the school year just starting, time will tell how the CSDA will impact the University community. In the meantime, Shepherd's Frye feels confident that the campus police force will help manage nuanced situations bound to arise where guns are permitted in some locations and not others, and where a "concealed" gun may be subject to interpretation. She believes that the CSDA might not make significant changes to Shepherd's environment, but that a period of adjustment is expected. And finally, Frye is reminding the campus to continue being observant and if they see something, they should say something.



**NOTICE OF FILINGS DUE**

ASSESSMENT INFORMATION as of JULY 1, 2024

**DATES TO FILE:**

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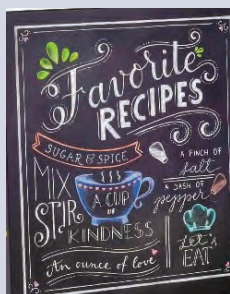
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// COMMUNITY

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# 2024 JEFFERSON COUNTY FAIR

## A Week Of Fun, Food & Competition



**ACCORDING TO TODD WILT**, the outgoing Jefferson County Fair Manager, the 2024 attendance numbers were on par with last year, with about 5 to 6 thousand visitors each night. This will be Wilt's last year as Fair Manager, as Patty Turner takes on the role of Fair Manager for 2025. The dry weather this year hasn't been great for animals and row crops, but vegetable farmers can provide their own water, so there

were plenty of good looking entries this year, including Robert Cook's peppers (image on page 1). Pam Wilt credits her husband's watering efforts for the success of her watermelon crop (below, top right). Mason Noland's market lambs were awarded grand champion and a 5th place overall award (image above). Jenny Daniel's goats received a grand champion and a 3rd place overall award (below, top left). 🏆



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PERSPECTIVE // NATURE

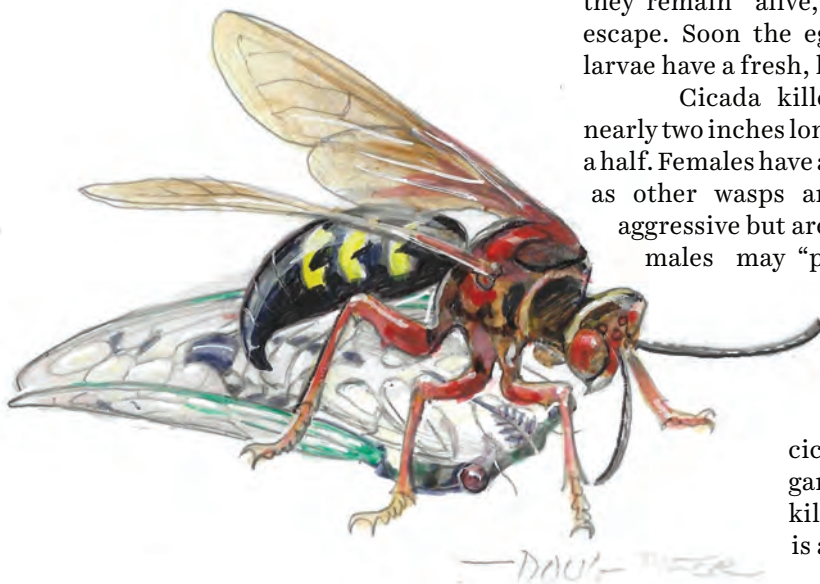
# GIANT WASPS TARGET CICADAS

By Doug Pifer

*Doug Pifer is an artist, naturalist, and writer. He has a Master's Degree in Journalism from Penn State and has been an editor and art educator. His illustrations have appeared in various books and magazines and he has been a contributor to The Observer for several years. He lives with his wife and assorted animals on 5.7 acres in a historic farmhouse near Shepherdstown, West Virginia.*

WHILE OUT DOG WALKING, I glanced at our backyard apple tree and saw a big wasp flying towards a low-growing, lichen covered branch. Something dropped heavily to the ground, and I walked over to investigate. I wondered, had the wasp knocked a small ripening apple out of the tree? In the tall grass under the apple tree an exciting drama was taking place. The giant wasp was a female cicada killer, and I had just seen her capture a cicada and drop to the ground with it.

By the time I reached the spot where they had fallen, the wasp had wrestled the cicada onto its back. The cicada had been buzzing and beating its wings madly but was now motionless in the deadly embrace of the big wasp. The two insects were belly to belly. The wasp clutched the cicada in a vise grip, holding its wings down tightly while stinging it repeatedly in the abdomen. So intent was the wasp on her task, she seemed unaware of anything else. It was a colorful battle, as if between two miniature plastic superhero toys.



The wasp's yellow spotted, black abdomen and bright orange head and legs contrasted against the white underbelly and green-veined wings of the cicada.

I was sorry I didn't have my cell phone camera with me to take a picture. Holding the dog firmly by the collar, I was barely able to restrain him from breaking up the battle. The wasp seemed to sense our struggle and briefly flew away, leaving the cicada motionless on its back. Soon it returned and began to drag the cicada away through the tall grass.

I decided to leave the wasp to complete her work. She probably would drag her stunned prey far enough up the trunk of the nearby tree so she could fly away with it.

Cicada killers are a species of digger wasps that appear here in late summer when cicadas start singing their buzzing songs in the trees. Although big and scary looking, cicada killers are shy and spend most of their time sipping nectar from flowers.

The female wasps find a bare, dry spot, usually a sandy bank, garden border or other open area with loose soil, where they dig shallow burrows. Sometimes several females share a burrow or dig burrows close to each other. Burrow entrances are about the diameter of a man's index finger, and active ones have a trough of loose soil leading up to the entrance. Meanwhile, groups of male cicada killers wait nearby to mate with the females as they emerge above ground.

Inside her freshly dug burrow, the female lays several eggs. Meanwhile she hunts down cicadas, which she paralyzes by stinging. She drags the cicadas into the burrow, where they remain alive, immobile, and unable to escape. Soon the eggs hatch, and the wasp larvae have a fresh, live food supply.

Cicada killers are big. Females are nearly two inches long, males about an inch and a half. Females have a sting but aren't aggressive as other wasps are. Males sometimes act aggressive but are unable to sting. Captured males may "pretend" to sting with the reproductive organ at the end of their abdomen but they can't pierce human skin.

I occasionally see a cicada killer in the flower gardens. But watching one kill a cicada in the backyard is a once in a lifetime treat.

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EXPLORE // MUSIC

MOVIES, MUSIC & MORE



UPCOMING EVENTS

Showtimes & advance ticket purchase at [OperaHouseLive.com](http://OperaHouseLive.com)

Shepherdstown Film Society

*The Big Lebowski* – Sep 6

*Citizen Kane* – Oct 4

*The Monk and the Gun* – Nov 8

*Turn Every Page* – Dec 6

More Movies & Theater On Screen

*National Theatre Live: Frankenstein* – Oct 6

*Something Wicked This Way Comes* – Oct 26

*The Last Unicorn* – Oct 27

Comedy

*Lucas Bohn & Jeff Shaw* – Oct 10

Live Music

*Olivia Lloyd* – Sep 20

*A Night of the Grateful Dead* – Oct 12

*The Platescrapers* – Oct 18

*Chelsea McBee* – Oct 19

*Frenchy and the Punk* – Oct 25

131 W. German St, Shepherdstown | [OperaHouseLive.com](http://OperaHouseLive.com)

Trick or Treat in Shepherdstown - Oct 31

CHAMBER MUSIC ORG STARTS NEW SEASON



FRIENDS OF MUSIC will open its 2024-2025 concert season with a Saturday, September 14 concert by an acclaimed early music trio called Gut, Wind, and Wire. The concert will be held at 7:30 pm in Shepherdstown's Trinity Episcopal Church. Entitled "Ancient Airs and Dances," the first concert of the season will offer a rich variety of rousing and lyrical music from 16th to 18th century Europe, including its Celtic lands, as well as some original compositions.

Featured composers will include England's John Playford (1623-1686) and Germany's Michael Praetorius (1571-1621). The concert will also explore some of the Renaissance airs and dances that inspired the modern Italian composer Ottorino Respighi (1879-1936).

The Gut, Wind, and Wire trio takes its name from the elements that bring its members' instruments to life: gut strings, human breath (wind), and wire strings. The trio's members are Mark Cudek (who plays the bass viol, cittern, and percussion); Ronn McFarlane (lute); and Mindy Rosenfeld (flutes, fifes, and bagpipes). All are longtime members of the famed Baltimore Consort early music ensemble.

In addition to the September concert, Friends of Music season will include concerts by the Two Rivers Chamber Orchestra on November 2 & 3, March 29 & 30, and May 31 & June 1. The Two Rivers String Quartet will perform on January 26. Friends of Music members get priority for ticket purchases.

Tickets for the September 14 concert are \$35 per person (free for Friends of Music members). Tickets and memberships can be purchased online at [FriendsWV.org](http://FriendsWV.org) or by mail requests with payment to FOM, PO Box 220, Shepherdstown, WV 25443. For more information, contact the Friends' office at [info@FriendsWV.org](mailto:info@FriendsWV.org).



EXPLORE // TOWN RUN CLEANUP

# TOWN RUN WATERSHED EVENTS

THE TOWN RUN WATERSHED GROUP was founded by a small group of volunteers earlier this year and it's made great progress in cleaning up the stream that serves as a secondary water supply for the Shepherdstown water system. If you wander through town you'll see the signs

at several places along the run that mark the locations where the group has removed trash and replaced invasive plants with native species. The volunteers meet on the second Saturday of each month. The next cleanup is September 14, from 9 am to 1 pm at Morgan's Grove Park. 📍



Be a \$eptic \$mart Homeowner

## FREE HOMEOWNER SEPTIC CLASS

Saturday, October 5  
1:30 - 3:00 PM  
Shepherdstown Public Library

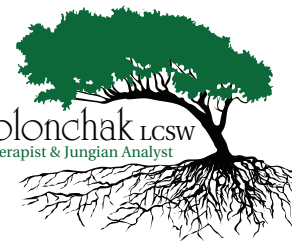
Refreshments will be served



[townrunwatershed.org](http://townrunwatershed.org)

“There is absolutely no truth that does not spell salvation for one person and damnation to another.”

— C.G. Jung  
("Psychology and Alchemy", Collected Works, Vol. 12, par.12)



Cathryn Polonchak, LCSW  
Psychotherapist & Jungian Analyst

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EXPLORE // POLITICAL CONVERSATIONS



# BEYOND PEPPERONI ROLLS

## Who Are We As West Virginians?



**WEST VIRGINIANS**, whether by birth or by choice, have a shared identity. What does it mean to be a West Virginian?

How do people outside of West Virginia view West Virginians? Are they stuck on rigid stereotypes of poverty and lack of education? Or do they see the innovative, resourceful, strong individuals and communities that are apparent to those who live here?

What characteristics are we proud to share as West Virginians? How do we move past the stereotypes? What do we want others to think about us?

Long time friends and colleagues, Senator Shelley Moore Capito and Senator Joe Manchin will meet on the stage of the Frank Arts Center Theater along with "The Voice

of West Virginia", MetroNews Talkline host Hoppy Kercheval to discuss how we move past the stereotypes and form a shared identity of West Virginians. The program is hosted by the Bill and Bonnie Stubblefield Institute for Civil Political Communications as part of its American Conversation Series.

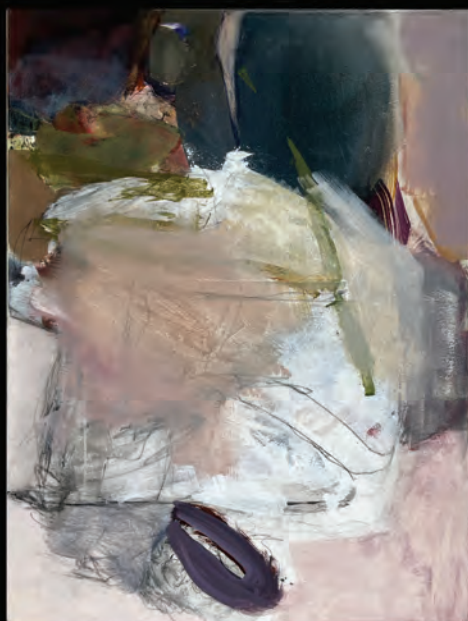
The event will be at the Frank Arts Center, on the Shepherd University campus (260 University Drive), on Thursday, September 5. The discussion begins at 7:00 pm, followed by a reception at 8:30. Tickets are free, but advance reservations are required (see website for details). More information at [StubblefieldInstitute.org](http://StubblefieldInstitute.org).



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EXPLORE // THE NATIONAL ROAD

# TALKING ABOUT THE NATIONAL ROAD

## Historic Shepherdstown Speaker Series

IF YOU'VE DRIVEN THROUGH downtown Boonsboro, then you've been on the National Road. Historic Shepherdstown will host a program about the history, preservation and promotion of the National Road on September 4. The event will take place at the Robert C. Byrd Center on the Shepherd University campus (213 North King Street), starting at 6:45 pm. The program is free and open to the public.

The guest speaker will be Tiffany Ahalt, who recently chaired the Frederick County's Rural and Scenic Roads Advisory Committee which was instrumental in creating an official commission overseeing the designation and protection of the County's most historic, scenic and unaltered rural roads. Ahalt has also

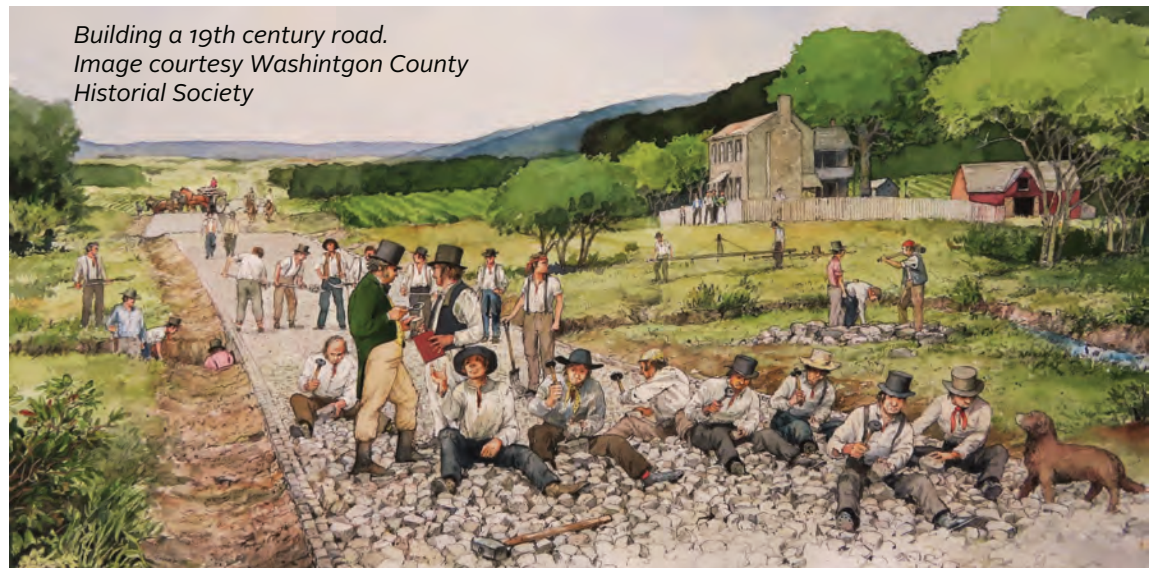
held leadership roles with the National Road Heritage Foundation, C&O Canal Association, Howard County (MD) Tourism Council and Maryland National Road Association.

The National Road was the first major federally funded highway built by the United States government. Built between 1811 and 1837, the original 620 mile road was a major transport path to the west for thousands of settlers and also stimulated the earliest forms of travel-related tourism. Often nicknamed the Main Street of America, in the 20th century with the advent of the automobile, the National Road was connected with other historic routes to California, with much of it aligned with US Route 40. Ahalt will explore the history of this



route and how national and state programs are paving the way to preserve and promote the landscapes and main streets along the National Road and other scenic byways.

The talk will be preceded by a short Annual Business Meeting for Historic Shepherdstown Commission, which will feature the presentation of the 2024 Historic Preservation Awards. More information at [HistoricShepherdstown.com](http://HistoricShepherdstown.com).



Building a 19th century road.  
Image courtesy Washintgon County  
Historial Society





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ENGAGE // COUNTY GOVERNMENT

## MANY VOLUNTEER ROLES OPEN

### Residents Can Serve on County Boards

YOU DON'T NEED TO RUN for election to get involved with the county. The County Commission is currently looking for volunteers to fill these roles:

- South Jefferson Library Committee (5 year term to June 2029)
- Bolivar-Harpers Ferry Public Library Board (5 year term to June 2029)
- Bolivar-Harpers Ferry Public Service District Board (6 year term to June 2030)
- Jefferson County Solid Waste Authority (4 year term to June 2028)
- Eastern Panhandle Regional Planning and Development Council (2 year term to June 2026)
- Jefferson County Development Authority (multiple terms, including a general citizen and representative for business, labor, and agribusiness)
- Jefferson County Building Commission (5 year term to July 2029)
- Jefferson County Property Safety Commission (1 unexpired citizen representative term ending February, 2026)
- HOME Consortium of the Eastern Panhandle (3 year term to 2027)
- Jefferson County Farmland Protection Board (4 year term to September 2028, including one Farm Bureau representative, one non-farmer, and one farmer-at-large)

If you're interested in serving, email a letter of interest and a resume or statement of qualifications to Edwina Benites-LM, county administrator [Boards@JeffersonCountyWV.org](mailto:Boards@JeffersonCountyWV.org) (or mail to P.O. Box 250, Charles Town, WV 25414). If you have questions about any of the roles or the qualifications needed, you can call the County Commission Office at 304-728-3284. 📧

## Comp Plan Comments Due September 6



The county Planning Commission (image above) will accept written comments on the draft Comprehensive Plan until 5:00 pm on September 6. Comments can be emailed to [Complan20245@JeffersonCountyWV.org](mailto:Complan20245@JeffersonCountyWV.org). The next regular Planning Commission is scheduled for September 10 at 7:00 pm. In addition to the public workshop for the Franklinton Farms solar project (see page 4) the commission may review the comments received at the August 27 public hearing or schedule a separate special meeting in September to review the comments on the Comprehensive Plan. Visit [ObserverWV.com/jefferson-comp-plan-2024](http://ObserverWV.com/jefferson-comp-plan-2024) for updates. 📧



SAVE THE DATE  
**OCTOBER 17-19**

For a schedule of events, visit  
[www.shepherd.edu/homecoming](http://www.shepherd.edu/homecoming).



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