Founded in 1989, Forward Wise County (FWC) is a leadership development program sponsored by the Wise County Chamber of Commerce. Forward Wise County's mission is to identify and develop local leaders from among a diverse group of individuals from business, industry, education, and civic groups who share a commitment to positive change in Wise County. A commencement exercise for the 2014 class of Forward Wise County was held May 22 in conjunction with the regular monthly meeting of the Wise County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors. The keynote speaker was Marcus Adkins, Owner of HairVolutions, and 2013 Forward Wise County graduate.

FWC 2014 began with class orientation on February 24, and an all-day retreat featuring the “Appalachian Wilderness Adventure Program” was held on Saturday, March 1, at Camp Bethel in Wise. On March 3, participants began attending the weekly, three-hour seminars which covered topics such as: criminal justice system, work styles and leadership skills, generational identity in the workplace, Appalachian perception, workplace harassment, economic development, sensitivity training, tour of Wise County Landfill, tour of Virginia City Hybrid Energy Center, and local government. The 15 graduates from this year's program are: Shaun Bolling, Thompson & Litton; Marsha Craiger, Mountain Empire Older Citizens; Michael Gilley, Mountain Empire Community College; Candice Lane, Wellmont Health System; James Lawson, Edward Jones Investments; Rebecca Leonard, Mountain View Regional Medical Center; Susann Light, Wise County Social Services; Cristian Martin, Norton Community Hospital; Chris Mullins, Crutchfield; Sharon Pigeon, Attorney at Law; Donald Sharitt, UVa-W ise, Cindi Smoot, UVa-W ise Alumni; Pamela Stewart, Mountain Empire O lder Citizens; Sherry Tabor, Appalachian Community Action Agency; and DeAndra Thacker, In Home Care. Shaun Bolling, Marsha Craiger, Candice Lane, Susann Light, Sharon Pigeon, and Cindi Smoot were also recognized for perfect attendance.

Kim Clisso of Norton Redevelopment and Housing Authority and Charmin McDaid served as co-chairs of the 2014 FWC Leadership Development Committee. Also serving on the committee were Pam Collie, Amanda Hughes, Dick Houchins, and Rick Colley.

The facilitators for this year's program were Shannon Blevins, Amy Bledsoe, Joe Brady, Bobby Collins, Gina W olford, Jackie Darter, Rachel Burgess, Ron Elkins, Leton Harding, Joseph B. Harvey, Olivia Harvey, Donna P. Henry, Geoffrey Hensley, Dick

(Continued on page 2)
Houchins, J., Sanders Huguenin, Dan Hunsaker, David Jenkins, Art Meade, Cindy Mefford, Mark Mitchell, Dr. Jeff Perry, Vicki Ratliff, Fred Ramey, Jeff Rolen, Mark Smith, Sandra Squires, Sharon Stacey, and Ron Vicars. Forward Wise County 2014 was sponsored by the following: County of Wise, Crutchfield Corporation, Dominion/Virginia City Hybrid Energy Center, Junction Center for Independent Living, Miners Exchange Bank, Mountain Empire Community College, Norton Community Hospital & Mountain States Health Alliance, Norton Redevelopment & Housing Authority, PD1 Behavioral Health Services/FH Prevention Services, The University of Virginia’s College at Wise, Thompson & Litton, Two Sisters Catering, W ellmont Health System, Wise County Public Schools, and Wise County/City of Norton Chamber of Commerce.

To date, FWC has graduated approximately 425 potential community leaders. The 2014 commencement exercise also featured the presentation of the 20th annual Outstanding Alumni Award to a FWC alumnus. Nominees for the award could be recognized for outstanding personal achievement, community service, or professional achievement. This year’s recipient of the Outstanding Alumni Award was Sarah Love McReynolds. Sarah Love graduated from the Forward Wise County Leadership Program in 1995.

Sarah Love has not only shown her commitment to her home town of St. Paul through her many years of community service. She also is very active throughout Wise County in a number of organizations. Most people will agree that it’s not a meeting until you see Sarah Love’s smiling face come through the door to the meeting and she gives you a big hug.

Here are just some the current community service activities that she is involved in:

* UVa-Wise Alumni Board
* Volunteer - UVa-Wise Athletics (Football)
* Wise Business Association
* Wise County/City of Norton Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors
* Spearheads Trails
* Wise County Tourism
* Upper TN River Roundtable Group
* Foundation Board for Norton Community Hospital
* Prayer group at the Wesley Foundation on the Campus of UVa-Wise
* Pianist for St. Paul Baptist Church

The Forward Wise County Leadership Program was pleased to present Mrs. Sarah Love McReynolds with the 2014 Forward Wise County Alumni Award.

In 1993, the Chambers of Commerce of Lee, Scott, and Wise Counties established the Ford C. Quillen Scholarship to honor the dedicated service of The Honorable Ford C. Quillen, who represented Lee, Scott, and Wise Counties in the Virginia House of Delegates for 24 years. Each year, a Lee, Scott, and Wise County or City of Norton graduating senior is selected for a Ford C. Quillen Scholarship. To be eligible, the graduate must be planning to enroll full-time in an undergraduate program at MECC or UVa-Wise. The applicant must also have demonstrated academic merit and leadership. The Wise County Chamber of Commerce’s Education & Scholarship Committee assists the MECC Foundation by selecting the scholarship recipient from Wise County or the City of Norton.

This year’s Wise County & City of Norton Chambers first recipient of the $500 Ford C. Quillen scholarship is Alyssa (Allie) Carol Sluss. Allie is a student at Central High School in Wise. She has a Grade Point Average of 4.06 and is ranked 13th in a class of 161. Allie has received many awards including:

- History Student Award - 2012, Business Student Award – 2012, 2013
- First Honor Roll – 2010 through 2013Member of the National Honor Society, Mu Alpha Theta, NSHSS, and FBLA
- Softball 2010, 2011
- Soccer – 2013, 2014

Allie plans on attending the University of Virginia’s College at Wise in the fall where she will pursue a degree in nursing. Upon completion, she plans on attaining her next goal of specializing in Neonatology. Allie is the daughter of Tina Sluss and the late Kenneth Sluss.

The second recipient of the Ford C. Quillen memorial scholarship is Olivia Dee Barton. Olivia is a student at Union High School in Big Stone Gap. She has a Grade Point Average of 3.50 and ranks 36th in her class of 150. Olivia plans on attending Mountain Empire Community College in the fall to pursue a degree as a Physical Therapy Assistant.

Olivia’s achievements and activities include:

- Most Outstanding in Life Planning
- 1st Honor Roll
- French Club
- Sports - JV Cheer, Varsity Tennis

Olivia is the daughter of Michael and Redena Barton of Big Stone Gap.
Upcoming Town Events/Festivals

“The Trail of the Lonesome Pine” Outdoor Drama Opened 51st Season

The Official State Outdoor Drama of Virginia, “The Trail of the Lonesome Pine”, began its 51st consecutive season on Friday, June 20. Opening in 1964, “The Trail of the Lonesome Pine” is the longest-running outdoor drama in Virginia. This musical drama of a proud mountain people will be performed Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights June through August 23. Gates open at 7:00 p.m. at the June Tolliver House in Big Stone Gap. For more information, please call the June Tolliver Playhouse at 276-523-1235.

Appalachia Coal/Railroad Days - July 31 – August 2

Will include events such as yard sales, beauty pageants, meet the bears (Union Football Team), 5K, with craft and food vendors and country singer Cody Mabe - Contact 376-565-3900 for more info

Guest River Rally Kicks Off on August 26 - September 2

The Guest River Rally is held annually on Labor Day weekend in the beautiful streets of downtown Coeburn and features dancing, music, arts, food, games, kid's activities, exhibits, and more. For more information, contact the Town of Coeburn at 276-395-33...

36th Annual Wise County Famous Fall Fling to be Held October 11-12 - ARTS...CRAFTS...FOOD...MUSIC...

Nestled in the heart of the Appalachian Mountains, and on the Crooked Road, Virginia’s Heritage Music Trail, Wise is “the place to be” during the second weekend each October. Held downtown and on the lawn of the historic courthouse while fall color is at its peak, the event features over 150 vendors selling crafts, food, jewelry, and more, while live traditional music ranging from banjos to bagpipes is played. The Fall Fling also features essay, photo and art contests, a chili cook-off and a 5 K race. Visit them on the Web: wisefallfling.com

Home Craft Days to be Held October 17-19

For more than 40 years, musicians and craftspeople from southwest Virginia, east Tennessee, and eastern Kentucky have come to Mountain Empire Community College (MECC), Big Stone Gap, VA, to celebrate Home Craft Days. The event is held on the third Saturday and Sunday in October. Contact the Office of Continuing Education at MECC at 276-523-7486 and 276-523-7464 for more information.

In 1991, the Wise County Chamber of Commerce established a scholarship to be awarded annually to a senior high school student who is a resident of Wise County or the City of Norton. Any student who is applying to either Mountain Empire Community College (MECC) or the University of Virginia’s College at Wise (U Va-W ise) as a full-time student is eligible, and all students regardless of financial need are encouraged to apply. This $250 scholarship is now called The Cheryl Richardson Memorial Scholarship in memory of our former board member who died of cancer on March 24, 1996, at the age of 37.

Judging for the scholarship is based on the student’s transcript of grades and test scores; SAT and ACT scores; a student essay presenting evidence of activities contributing to school/community service and leadership; and one recommendation from a teacher or school employee who is in a position to evaluate character, service, and potential for success.

The recipient of the 2014 CHERYL RICHARDSON MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP was Kevin VanNess of Norton. Kevin is a student at J.I. Burton High School in Norton with a Grade Point Average of 3.76, and he has been involved in many different clubs and organizations such as:

- Key Club, BETA Club, SWAG (Students with a Gift)
- Sports – Football, Basketball, Baseball and Track

In addition to his school work and participation in the above, Kevin also works at Dairy Queen in Norton. He plans to attend UVa-Wise in the fall. Kevin is the son of Lorie VanNess of Norton.
Chamber, Others Celebrate Business Appreciation Week

The Wise County & City of Norton Chamber of Commerce joined scores of communities across Virginia in recognizing the many benefits business brings to the state and local communities. In honor of our local businesses and industries, the Chamber’s Economic & Small Business Development committee organized a free award’s luncheon which was held on Wednesday, May 28, 2014, at 11:30 a.m., in Cantrell Banquet Hall, at The University of Virginia’s College at Wise (UVa-Wise), Wise, VA. Approximately 80 people were in attendance. The award’s luncheon was sponsored by Norton Industrial Development Authority, Wise County Industrial Development Authority, and the Chamber. It was hosted by UVa-Wise.

This year’s luncheon featured keynote speaker, John Provo, Director, Office of Economic Development, Virginia Tech. The highlight of this event was the presentation of awards to the following businesses for new business by expansion or job creation, as well as the dedication they have given and the impact they have made toward the stability and well-being of our area: Collins Auto & Towing, Magnolia Kitchen, New Beginnings Pulmonary Rehabilitation Services, Norton Cinema City, OPTAFUEL, Spearhead Trails, and Thompson & Litton.

In 2005, the Wise County/City of Norton Chamber of Commerce’s Small Business Development Committee (SBDC) established the Small Business of the Year Award to recognize successful local small businesses and to encourage entrepreneurship. Clinch River Adventures of St. Paul, VA, was presented the Small Business of the Year award from the Chamber.

This year there were also two special recognition awards given to companies with over 100 years of service to our communities. Pepsi Cola Bottling Company, 100 Years and Powell Valley National Bank, 125 years.

CLINCH RIVER ADVENTURES
Since opening its doors in 2013, Clinch River Adventures has serviced over 700 customers from 14 different states. They employed 1 part-time employee last year besides the owner/operators, Terri Anne Funk and her husband, Brock. This year they are expecting to hire 2 additional seasonal employees to the payroll.
This season they are excited to offer two new attractions: Virtual Tour Guide of the Clinch- Learn about the history and science of the most biodiverse river in the US, the Clinch River, via electronic tablet while floating down the river. Clinch River Bible Battle-Bring your youth group or church group to learn more about the life of Jesus Christ. Everyone will be equipped with water cannons and when you answer a question accurately about the Bible you get to blast the other team.
During the 2014 season they will have the 1st Annual Kayak Race-Clinch River Paddle fest!!!

COLLINS AUTO & TOWING
Collins Auto & Towing is locally owned and operated by David and Kim Collins. They are now open in two locations: 112 Laurel Ave, Coeburn, and 531 W. Main Street in Wise. The ribbon cutting for the grand opening was held in Wise in early July. Since opening their new location Collins Auto has provided exceptional service as well as provided additional jobs to the Wise Community. Collins Auto is a full-service garage offering: VA inspections, oil changes, brakes, exhaust, and 24 hour towing.

Their motto is: Come & Get Drenched in the Clinch!!!!!!!!!!!!!
**MAGNOLIA KITCHEN**
Magnolia Kitchen Restaurant opened their doors in June of 2013 in Norton, Virginia in response to needing more variety in eating facilities for our county residents and our visitors to the area. Magnolia serves a menu filled with New Orleans style food from Cajun dishes to Jambalaya and also a variety of sandwiches, soups and salads. During their first year of business they have received rave reviews for their food as well as service. In the late summer Magnolia Kitchen added a bar and meeting room and live music on the weekends. One review said that Magnolia Kitchen is a “Diamond in the Rough” in Norton, Va.

**NEW BEGINNINGS PULMONARY REHABALITION**
New Beginnings Pulmonary Rehab, Inc. is the first of its kind in Southwest Virginia. New Beginnings Pulmonary Rehab is a privately owned pulmonary rehabilitation center. They are the first in 18 years to be approved by the Federal Department of Labor to provide pulmonary rehabilitation to their members. The staff consists of a full time Registered Nurse with 17.5 years’ experience and a full time Registered Respiratory Therapist with 26.5 years’ experience, and a physician that is available for immediate response in the event of emergencies. Pulmonary rehabilitation is a program for people with chronic lung diseases like Black Lung, COPD, and chronic bronchitis to help them lead full, satisfying lives and restore them to their highest functional capacity.

**NORTON CINEMA CITY**
Mountain Entertainment, Inc. was purchased in September 2005 and it included the Plaza Cinema in Wise, the C eburn Cinema, and the Central Drive-In in Norton. They had two goals in mind: one was to consolidate all of the indoor cinemas into one location and to keep the Central Drive In open for generations to come. Cinema City opened in May of 2008 in a remodeled grocery store in downtown Norton. When Cinema City first opened they had 7 screens and offered the first all stadium seating theater in the area. Shortly thereafter the transition from film to digital began at Cinema City in 2009. In 2010 they expanded and added the additional theaters. In 2011 the conversion to digital was completed at Cinema City and all nine screens allow customers to have the best entertainment possible.

During the process of changing things for the indoor experience they also were working on the Central Drive In making changes to the concession stand and other areas of the property. In 2010 they did a major overhaul of the concession area allowing for easier flow for people as they ordered their snacks. They have also added a game room in 2011 that provides pre-show entertainment and a place for people to have
birthday parties. In 2014 they started their biggest project to date. The addition of the digital projector and changing the building more to accommodate this has and will provide the citizens of our area continued access to the drive-in experience.

OPTAFUEL
OptaFuel is a research and development company located in the old Buster Brown building in the Esserville Industrial Park. They currently employ 40 people at their facility with expectations of expanding their workforce in 2014. OptaFuel is pioneering the development and commercialization of new technologies for the transformation of renewable non-food feedstock to cellulosic biofuels, chemical building-blocks, and biomaterials.

Their technology successfully integrates two crucial steps - chemical pretreatment and enzymatic hydrolysis. The result is a patented process that offers significant improvements in processing conditions and operating cost compared to other available technologies.

SPEARHEAD TRAILS
Spearhead Trails the marketing persona of the Southwest Regional Recreation Authority (SRRA). Formed in 2008 by the Virginia General Assembly, the mission of SRRA is to develop and manage multi-use trails in the Southwest Regional Recreation Area to stimulate, enhance and sustain economic development and job creation through entrepreneurial opportunities in Southwest Virginia.

Since its first trail system, Mountain View, opened in late June of 2013, the town of St. Paul, and Wise County have seen over million dollars in private investments, creating over a dozen businesses either with expansion or enhancements. For the first time in 40 years, the town of St. Paul is collecting lodging taxes and will soon have over 20 rooms from three new lodging businesses. All over the town and the region, entrepreneurs are making investments and creating jobs driven by the catalyst of this new economic development Engine.

By 2017, Spearhead Trails will have opened over 500 miles of OHV and 100+ miles of equestrian trails. Annual permit revenues will be over $750,000 per year and merchandise sales will top $300,000. Spearhead Trails’ utilization of partner merchants, retailers, businesses, and convenience stores throughout the region will help to achieve its revenue goals, sharing over $250,000 in profit and creating over 100 direct and indirect jobs. The 20,000 annual visitors to our trail systems will be served by dozens of new startup businesses providing ATV rentals, food, lodging, and retail services. Overall economic impact to the State of Virginia will be over 10 million dollars per year generating over $500,000 in sales tax revenues.
THOMPSON & LITTON

“Firms don’t design projects, people do.” This belief was instilled more than 50 years ago, and is still apparent by the professionalism you will find within each Thompson & Litton employee. Thompson & Litton was established in 1956 by William A. Thompson, Jr. and John W. Litton, they have taken great pride in housing a staff capable of delivering superior service to all of their clients.
From the original staff of seven, they have grown to over 120 employees in seven offices, offering an array of engineering, architectural, surveying, planning and construction services. By focusing on the future, they have provided their clients with creative solutions with an emphasis on the world around them.
Today, they serve our five-state Mid-Atlantic client base from offices in Wise, Radford, Clinwood, Tazewell, Chilhowie, VA, and in Mosheim and Bristol, Tennessee, with a professional and support staff of architects, engineers, surveyors, land-use planners, construction administrators, grant/financing specialists, and other support personnel. Every project they work on is handled with integrity, insight and innovation.
Thompson & Litton has had an integral part in the design of many of our local buildings and businesses. Throughout the years they have provided many hours of community service as well as financial support for all of our towns and city.

PEPSI COLA BOTTLING COMPANY

Pepsi Cola Bottling Company received Special Recognition due to the celebration of 100 years in business in 2014. The corporation was incorporated on May 18, 1914 as the T. M. Pepper Bottling Company. The company had been a sole proprietorship engaged in the soft drink business in Norton, Virginia and belonging to a family with the last name of Pepper for some time prior to the original incorporation.
In February of 1925, the corporate charter was amended to change the name of the corporation to Stone Mountain Bottling Company upon the occasion of its purchase by George W. Vernon. At that time or shortly thereafter H. P. Hunnicutt and T. R. Hunnicutt, became stockholders and officers of the company. Just 19 days prior to this change of hands and name change of the corporation, George Hunnicutt, Sr. was born on January of 1925 and became involved in the business from an early age.

Despite the general economic malaise nationally and the rather profound regional impact of recent regulatory actions against the coal industry, the Company has managed to start its 100th year on some high notes: The Food Safety Modernization Act became law three years ago and created significant and stringent new requirements for the food and beverage industries. Many are struggling to meet the requirements of this new law which, for the first time, gives the FDA the authority to recall a product or even shut a business down if their requirements aren’t met. Early in this year, the Company completed its compliance efforts and met the not insignificant challenge of earning the newly mandated FSSC 22000 Food Safety System Certification. The Company has also just won the coveted Caleb Bradham Presidential Quality award this year from the Pepsi-Cola Company.

POWELL VALLEY NATIONAL BANK

Powell Valley National Bank received Special Recognition for celebrating 125 years in business in 2013. The Powell Valley National Bank (PVN B) began operations in 1888 in Jonesville, Virginia. The original office was a Victorian style home located at 33785 Main Street. The earliest documented financial statement is from 1900. In 2014, the Bank created an investment affiliate, Powell Valley Investment Services, to offer a wide range of investment, securities and financial planning services to the region.
Powell Valley National Bank, the oldest Bank in far Southwest Virginia, and Virginia’s 5th Oldest Bank, is number one in market deposit share for the Lee, Scott and Wise County area according to most recent FDIC deposit reports. The Bank is now entering its 126th year of continuous operations having survived and prospered thru twenty-seven (27) economic recessions including the Great Depression and the Great Recession of 2008.

Pictured above: Dan Minahan, George “Pedro” Hunnicutt, Jr. and Kim Clisso

Pictured above: Leton Harding and Sonny Martin; PVNB; Dan Minahan and Kim Clisso, Wise County/City of Norton Chamber
The 28th annual Best Friend Festival was held June 10-14, 2014, in downtown Norton, Virginia. The theme was “Jump into Summer”. Each year, the Best Friend Festival committee sponsors a t-shirt logo contest. The winning design is that which best represents the theme of the festival and the spirit of friendship. This year’s Best Friend Festival t-shirt logo contest winner was Marla Bush of Appalachia; she was presented with $100 and a Best Friend Festival t-shirt.

This year’s festival was jam-packed with activities appealing to all age groups, including: Norton’s Largest Sandbox, First Bank & Trust Picnic in the Park, Paint-a-Trash-Can, Bike Rodeo, Concert in the Park, Friend’s & Farmer’s Market, Dog Costume Contest, Senior Citizen’s Day, Norton Cinema City Kid’s Day, Norton Lion’s Club Kid’s Night, Karaoke Contests, Crankin’ with Crutchfield, Slip & Slide Water Activities, A Kid’s Place, Kiwanis Pancake Breakfast, Citywide Yard Sale, Flea Market Vendors, The Regional Rehab 5K Run, “His Passion - The Greatest Love Story Ever Told” and a Car Show Saturday.

Thanks to the Craig Street Ramblers for the entertainment on Tuesday, as well as the Dog Contest participants.

Thanks to great entertainment, generous sponsors, and tireless volunteers, the 28th annual Best Friend Festival was a tremendous success! This year’s activities attracted people of all ages and each event drew in large crowds. In addition, thousands turned out to Park Avenue on Friday to enjoy the Friday night Family Fun Night, featuring music by Leggz, and a ventriloquist.

On behalf of the Best Friend Festival committee, the Wise County/City of Norton Chamber of Commerce would like to thank the City of Norton and dozens of other sponsors for their generous contributions. Without the support of local businesses and civic organizations, no community activity can continue to grow and be successful. A list of event sponsors are available online. Please make every effort to thank these sponsors for making this event a great success.

In addition to financial support, it’s the combined efforts of countless volunteers that make this festival possible. Therefore, the Chamber would like to thank Julia Newsome and Judy Miller, Co-Chairs, Wise County/City of Norton Chamber of Commerce, Best Friend Festival committee, and all the members of this committee and other volunteers for their hard work and dedication.

More photos from the week are on the Best Friend Festival Facebook page at www.facebook.com/BestFriendFestival.