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WESTOVER

City makes moves to improve business, resident life

BY BEN CONLEY
BConley@DominionPost.com

There's a lot going on in Westover. A plan to join the state's municipal Home Rule program, the creation of a land reuse agency, a charter change pertaining to city elections and a partnership that would turn management of the city's sanitary sewer system over to Morgantown Utility Board are all in the works.

All that is in addition to preparations for two major projects that will upgrade the aforementioned sewer system and address the city's primary thoroughfare.

Anyone who follows the goings on in Westover, or

has driven through the city, is well aware of the need to address Holland Avenue. Conversations about a major project addressing about 2,000 feet of Holland Avenue, including broken down sanitary sewer and stormwater lines beneath the street's surface and the large retaining wall that runs along its lower portion, began in earnest more than two years ago. It's been the focal point of the city's capital improvement plans since. But those plans shifted dramatically earlier this year, when city engineer Doug Smith, of Thrasher Engineering, said the pump station at the heart of West-

SEE WESTOVER, I-15



William Wotring/The Dominion Post

Westover City Council is working to bring improvements for businesses and residents.



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STAR CITY

Town thrives on being a community

BY JIM BISSETT
JBissett@DominionPost.com

Before GPS, Google Maps and whatnot, what follows was generally the West Virginia way of giving directions.

“Turn left at the old so-and-so.”

“It’s just past from where (insert now-defunct business name here) used to be.”

“Take a left where they tore down the hardware store. Can’t miss it.”

Should you be unsure in your navigation of Star City, however, know that the above examples — won’t work.

Reason being, Acting Mayor Sharon Doyle said, is that in her town, if a business moves out, it isn’t long before another moves in.

These are nationally known businesses that deploy “saturation adver-

tising” — meaning we see their ads and promotional materials even if they are as-yet in our market.

The former Shoney’s on Monongahela Boulevard will soon be home to an O’Reilly Auto Parts, and yes, we know you’re singing the jingle to yourself right now, as you’re reading this.

The long courtship of Steak ‘n Shake is finally paying off, she said, as the burger and milkshake chain is the process of setting up a location on Mon Boulevard down from the Coliseum, the mayor said.

Talks for that deal had been on-and-off again since 2019.

There’s a reason the mayor is touting the restaurants and night life: They are a destination, she said, especially the national places setting up shop for the first time.

Take in an evening, Doyle said, and you just might come back for an afternoon at the Edith B. Barill Riverfront Park and Trail.

The expanse along the Monongahela River was established and named in honor of the mayor who served from 1989-2001, and had several marquee infrastructure projects on her civic resume during that tenure.

Star City likes to recognize its officials who toiled to make the town what it is today.

Doyle, who has lived in Star City for 39 years and has served on town council for nearly that long, credits recent mayor Herman Reid for his work ethic and vision in the endeavor to make the town civically relevant.

Her fellow council members just appointed her a



The Dominion Post file photo

Star City takes advantage of its riverfront park to host events such as regular farmers markets and this Vintage Fest.

SEE STAR, I-15

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GRANVILLE

Town grows but keeps it's small-town identity

BY JIM BISSETT
JBissett@DominionPost.com

It's a civic contradiction that suits Granville's mayor just fine.

As Patty Lewis loves to note, her town is growing — and isn't growing — at the same time.

For the shoppers and baseball fans across the region, Granville might appear to be one big commercial district, which it is.

One big commercial district, that is.

That's in the form of the sprawling University Town Centre expanse, at the borders of the town's city limits.

With commanding views of the surrounding area, the enterprise that has made its commercial home among the hills boasts retail, retail and more retail — not to mention the car dealerships and chain restaurants that can always manage to keep the place bustling.

Healthcare, too. A number of clinics operated by WVU Medicine have a location within its confines.

Granville can even say it's a Major League Base-

ball town. That's courtesy of the Monongalia County Ball Park, where the championship West Virginia Black Bears of the MLB Draft League, have a home.

WVU's baseball Mountaineers, who regularly chart W's all across the Big 12, play their home games there as well.

If you're looking for a fun afternoon or evening out, Lewis said, or a big-ticket purchase, you need not go anywhere else.

But here's the thing, she said: Before the town center, there was the town.

"Granville has always been a good place to live," said Lewis, who goes back to mid-1980s there.

As she made her first steps into Granville's governmental workings, first as an employee and later as an elected official, she remembers working on municipal budgets of, say, \$150,000, which could be a University Towne Center take on a home football weekend or a baseball pennant race.

Granville's most recent budget, the mayor reports, came in at around \$17 million on the cost ledger.

With all that happy com-

merce, though, comes that aforementioned contradiction, she said.

"I'm really happy we've been able to retain our neighborhoods," she said.

"Our long-time residents, the families who have just always been here, appreciate that. I'm a long-time resident and I appreciate that."

These days, Granville is looking inward for development.

There's The Silo in the Square, an event and gathering space tucked just off Main Street and the ongoing dock project, to better capitalize on the Monongahela River, which runs along town.

When that's done, she said, it will be even easier for fishing enthusiasts and others who just enjoy putting a boat on the water come summer.

Once you tip your toes in the waters of Granville proper, the mayor said — you just may want to live there, too.

"We really do have the best of both worlds."

TWEET @DominionPostWV



Ron Rittenhouse/The Dominion Post

The ongoing Granville dock project will help the town to better capitalize on the Monongahela River, which runs along town.

"I'M REALLY HAPPY WE'VE BEEN ABLE TO RETAIN OUR NEIGHBORHOODS. OUR LONG-TIME RESIDENTS, THE FAMILIES WHO HAVE JUST ALWAYS BEEN HERE, APPRECIATE THAT. I'M A LONG-TIME RESIDENT AND I APPRECIATE THAT."

Patty Lewis
Granville mayor

MONONGALIA

County keeps focus on broadband expansion

BY BEN CONLEY
BConley@DominionPost.com

Broadband continues to be a central focus for the Monongalia County Commission as it works toward a project to connect one of the 14 rings identified in its 2021 comprehensive broadband plan.

A vertical strip across western Monongalia County known as Ring 11 was selected as the initial broadband project due to the lack of internet access in the area.

The county's goal is to provide what's called "middle mile" infrastructure that internet service providers can use to connect the homes and businesses in the area.

But doing so isn't going to be easy or cheap.

During a February update Chris Kirkland, president of consulting firm Lit Communities, shared a conceptual design of the infrastructure needed to provide wireless

coverage for Ring 11.

It included the construction of nearly 20 towers in order to provide service to 80% of the 711 "demand points" (homes and businesses) in the ring.

The cost of final engineering for the Ring 11 project is expected to be north of \$700,000. Then the county will get a better sense of the cost to actually build the infrastructure, which would likely be owned by a county broadband authority operating through the Morgantown Area Partnership.

Final construction drawings and a bill of needed materials for the Ring 11 project are anticipated in August.

The commission has initially committed \$10 million of its \$20.5 million American Rescue Plan allocation to the broadband project.

In addition to broadband, the county continues to work with private partners to bring development

and infrastructure improvements to the county.

The commission just initiated the process of extending the TIF (property tax) and STIF (sales tax) districts that comprise the Monongalia County Economic Opportunity Development District — think University Town Centre, The Gateway and WestRidge.

If ultimately approved, the TIF would be extended to 2057 and the STIF to 2053.

Ryan Lynch, with developer WestRidge, said the districts have an annual economic impact north of \$500 million annually and support more than 4,500 jobs tied to 2.3 million square feet of new development.

"The above development and impacts would at least double if the districts are extended and the development continues at the pace it has for the last 10 years," he explained.



The Dominion Post file photo

The county continues to work on getting a grant to improve Exit 155 of Interstate 79 so expansion toward Mylan Park can continue.

Much of that future growth would be in the direction of Mylan Park, making improvements to I-79 Exit 155 crucial.

The West Virginia Division of Highways has a \$66 million project to reconfigure Exit 155 into a divergent diamond.

The county sought a \$95 million federal INFRA Grant to pick up at Exit 155 and create a new four-lane road and parallel pedestrian/bike path to Mylan Park.

While Commission President Tom Bloom said that grant application was unsuccessful, the county intends to reapply.

Further, the county commission, the Morgantown Utility Board and WestRidge put pen to paper

SEE COUNTY, I-15

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DOWNTOWN

City makes move to improve safety downtown

BY BEN CONLEY
BConley@DominionPost.com

Two of downtown Morgantown's major arteries will receive some long-awaited attention over the next two years.

That process will begin this summer with a \$1,478,524 Pleasant Street streetscape project.

The project will run between University Avenue and Spruce Street.

It will highlight and improve sidewalks, enhance crosswalks, upgrade lighting, install and improve curb cuts and incorporate colored bricks, pedestrian features and improved green space in the sidewalks and along the street.

The city will follow that up next summer with a similar project on one block of Walnut Street, between Spruce and High.

That project is expected to cost \$1,267,011.

In addition to enhancing pedestrian amenities, the city has also taken steps to increase safety downtown.

Communications Director Drew Bailey explained the city used \$77,000 in American Rescue Plan Act dollars to purchase 49 cameras to be installed downtown. Bailey said installation will likely run another \$7,500 plus \$65,000 for network support.

Bailey said the city consulted with the city police and fire departments on camera locations, initially

IN ADDITION TO CITY-LED INITIATIVES, MAIN STREET MORGANTOWN PRESIDENT MARK DOWNS TOLD THE DOMINION POST THERE IS A DESIRE AMONG A LARGE GROUP OF STAKEHOLDERS, INCLUDING PRIVATE ENTREPRENEURS, CITY OFFICIALS, MONONGALIA COUNTY, WVU, MORGANTOWN AREA PARTNERSHIP AND OTHERS TO REIMAGINE SOUTH HIGH STREET, THE CITY'S WHARF DISTRICT AND RIVERFRONT AMENITIES.

focusing on High Street between Willey and Pleasant streets.

All told, the city dedicated some \$2 million of its ARPA money to initiatives aimed at addressing various facets of the downtown issue.

Those expenditures include \$800,000 to assist Milan Puskar Health Right in moving its health clinic and Friendship House out of the downtown; \$600,000 to aid housing programs with the West Virginia



Ron Rittenhouse/The Dominion Post

Morgantown has taken steps to increase safety downtown. The city used \$77,000 in American Rescue Plan Act dollars to purchase 49 cameras to be installed downtown.

Coalition to End Homelessness and the Fairmont-Morgantown Housing Authority; \$300,000 for Bartlett House and Morgantown Community Resources, the entity that facilitates Hazel's House of Hope; and \$200,000 to fund a city ambassadors program.

In March, Morgantown Police Chief Eric Powell reinstituted the depart-

ment's foot patrols downtown after temporarily suspending the practice due to staffing issues.

The goal is to get more people downtown for events and supporting city businesses.

In the most recent legislative session, a Morgantown-backed bill was passed allowing for the creation of designated outdoor refreshment areas, or

DORA.

A DORA can be created by ordinance of city council for a designated space and time, during which people of legal drinking age can mill about carrying an alcoholic beverage purchased within the zone.

The passage of the DORA bill comes about a year after an agreement between the city and the West Virginia Division of

Highways allowing the city to close High Street between Willey and Foundry streets without pre-approval from the DOH.

In addition to city-led initiatives, Main Street Morgantown President Mark Downs told The Dominion Post there is a desire among a large group

SEE SAFETY, I-15

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BUSINESS

More in works at Morgantown Industrial Park

BY BEN CONLEY
BConley@DominionPost.com

It was May 1, 2023. A memorable day for many in the Morgantown area, including Glen Adrian, who, along with his brother Kevin, own the Morgantown Industrial Park as Enrout Properties. “Mountaintop [Beverage] is starting production. That’s a big thing. They’re starting to make product today, Adrian recently told The Dominion Post. “When you consider it was August of 2021 when we started moving dirt. Now it’s May 2023 and they’re rolling, so that’s a great thing. They’re the big kahuna when it comes to manufacturing and jobs. It’s not a prayer and a promise. They’re up there open and making it happen.” The massive state-of-the-art aseptic, shelf-stable food and beverage packaging facility covers acres of

property and was the impetus for not only the expansion of the industrial park through the creation of a second TIF district, but the push for a new Harmony Grove interchange that will provide direct access between I-79 and the industrial park. In that regard, Adrian said the rest of 2023 will likely be spent working with the West Virginia Division of Highways and the Federal Highway Administration finalizing a data-gathering process that requires everything from design proposals to traffic, noise and crash numbers to complete historical and environmental surveys of the site. After that comes a state and federal review, public meetings, a submission for approval and the funding discussion. “It’s moving along, but it’s a complicated process,” he said. ‘It’s probably going to take most of this year to

go through all of that. Then we hope this thing will be under construction in 2024 and open in 2025. That’s the goal.” In addition to its role as one of the county’s economic and manufacturing centers, MIP will soon be a home for the county’s emergency services. The new MECCA 911 call center and garage is currently under construction on one of the expanded park’s more elevated pads. As previously reported, Enrout will build the 911 center and lease it back to the county at a rate that will cover the cost of the building, plus an additional percentage factored in to cover property taxes in order to make the TIF district whole. At the end of the 30-year life of the district, the building’s deed will be transferred over to the county. Working cost estimates put the new 9,600-



William Wotring/The Dominion Post

Morgantown Industrial Park square-foot facility at about \$9 million, including contingencies. The finished product will replace the county’s existing 5,000-square-foot

MECCA facility, built in 1997 on Mon General Drive. Adrian said he expects that facility to be up and running in the first quarter of 2024. “We’ve accomplished a lot in the last year. The biggest thing we had to do

SEE WORKS, I-O





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WVU

Marketing’s new leader talks Country Roads in China

Takes W.Va. brands global

BY JAKE STUMP
WVU Business Magazine

No matter how you slice it, Pizza Hut puts global marketing into perspective. Ask Annie Cui. In her early days as an academic, Cui, originally from China, was astonished by the stark differences between the mega pizza chain’s stores in her native country and the United States. For one, Pizza Hut is considered a luxury, upscale restaurant in China. “When I first heard about Pizza Hut in the U.S., I was so shocked,” said Cui, now marketing chair at the WVU Chambers College of Business and Economics. “I remember exchange students from the U.S. visiting China saying that Pizza Hut was just pizza, nothing fancy. But in China, they serve an afternoon tea, and you can wait 30 minutes or longer to be seated. Everything about it is high-end from the environment to the lighting to the background music.” In other words, if you want to “wow” a date in China, you take them to a Pizza Hut. Ice cream brand Häagen-Dazs has a similar reputation. In the U.S., it’s a product that can be picked up in nearly any supermarket or convenience store.

But in China, it’s an expensive dessert, reserved for the most special occasions. “In China, you can only get it in a few big cities such as Beijing and Shanghai at its high-end Häagen-Dazs Boutique & Café,” Cui said. “There was a mainstream promotion for Häagen-Dazs, as a cultural symbol, with a slogan, ‘If you love her, treat her to Häagen-Dazs.’ That elevates it to an emotional aspect — another fascinating story about branding.” And it’s not as if the quality or taste of Pizza Hut pizza or Häagen-Dazs ice cream are vastly distinct between the countries. Cui asserts it’s all about the marketing, which emerged as her area of expertise. “I found it fascinating how brands can position themselves so differently across cultures and be successful,” Cui said. “That’s what interests me — the international marketing aspect.”

Changing appetites

In the early 2000s, Cui’s quest for education took her abroad to the U.S. in pursuit of a graduate degree at Kent State. She first wanted to major in mass media management. But after spending some time in this country, marketing lured her in. “The core of the magic formula of producing all those global branding and global marketing strategies directed me to pursue a

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MYLAN PARK

Tournaments, festivals, more find a place in Mon County

BY LINDSEY FLEMING
Newsroom@DominionPost.com

Everything from national dog shows and diving competitions to state sports tournaments and local festivals can find a home at Mylan Park.

“The park has a lot to offer,” said Susan Riddle, president and CEO of Visit Mountaineer Country CVB and a member of Mylan Park Foundation’s board. “It attracts people to move here. A number of people who move here do so in part because they see what’s offered at Mylan Park.”

And within the next couple of years the 400-acre expanse will offer even more recreational opportunities, with the addition of a campground, bike park and all-inclusive playground, if all goes according to plan.

Federal funding also means that the secondary entrance to the park will get a facelift. And there’s a chance an ice arena could become another attraction, though at this point, “we’re just now looking at the feasibility of adding a slab of ice,” said Terri Howes, Mylan Park special projects coordinator.

She said stakeholders are in the process of traveling to other facilities to see what they have to offer.

This comes after BOPARC’s Board of Directors voted to reject the bids received for an overhaul of the Morgantown Ice Arena in February.

During that meeting, the newspaper previously reported, BOPARC Executive Director Melissa Wiles said, “Mylan Park is exploring construction of a new rink that serves the purpose of hosting leagues and tournaments for [Morgantown Hockey Association] and WVU Hockey.”

This, Wiles added at the time, would allow BOPARC to focus on a rink that was geared toward community recreation.

Howes said Mylan Park is working with county and city officials as well as BOPARC as they move forward.

While there’s no guarantee community members will get to lace up their skates and hit the ice at the park anytime soon, but by spring 2025, they should be able to set up camp and pop some wheelies.

Howes said plans are to open the Mylan Park RV Resort and Campground in spring 2024 and have the bike complex up and running the following spring,

at the latest.

The campground, which will be run by Kampgrounds of America (KOA), will be situated on 37 acres of land that was once an abandoned mine, next to the Anker Fields Complex. It is expected to serve hundreds of potential travelers and include amenities such as 169 RV/camper sites, 24 rentable cabins, four tent sites, a clubhouse and shower facilities.

Funding for the project comes from a \$3.75 million grant from the State of West Virginia given to the Mylan Park Foundation through the Abandoned Mine Land Economic Revitalization (AMLER) Program.

As for the action sports and bike park complex, it will include a USA BMX-sanctioned hard-surfaced track, Union Cycliste Internationale competition-level hard-surfaced pump track, hard-surfaced progressive bike jump/flow lines and a mountain bicycle skills trail loop, as well as restrooms, a registration building and a shade structure.

Funded through a \$4.68 million grant as part of the American Rescue Plan through the state’s Department of Economic Development’s Travel, Tourism and Outdoor Recreation program, the facility will be one of the largest of its kind in the eastern United States.

“It’s definitely going to be a destination,” Riddle said. “It will be able to attract large-scale, national events.”

She likened it to Mylan Park’s aquatic center and track complex. Since the center opened in 2019, it has boosted tourism and proved to be a long-term economic driver for the region. For instance, though officials lost a bid to have the 2024 Olympic Diving Trials come to the facility earlier this year, Riddle said, “we still gained key partners from the process. We made a tremendous impression on these people. And we said, even if we don’t win this bid, our intention is that we want to host at least one big event every year before we bid again.”

And the aquatic center is no stranger to large-scale events. On the heels of hosting the 2022 USA Diving Winter National Championships in December, it will host the 2023 USA Diving National Championships from May 17-24.

Howes said the Hazel and J.W. Ruby Community

Center Sports Complex, which opened in 2022, is another popular destination in the park.

“The growth of the sports complex has been very exciting,” she said. “It’s getting tournaments and booking out in the way we hoped and envisioned it would.”

In terms of what’s on the horizon, she added that the final planning process has begun to bring the state pickleball championship to Mylan Park in November. Officials also found out in February that the park received \$375,000 to develop a gateway for the second entrance to the park, near the bus garage. Howes said Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., helped the park receive the congressionally directed spending award through the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Whether families gather at the park for fun, competition or education, Monica Marietta envisions a space where they can take a break and play together.

“We are in the process of raising funds for a playground that’s not just for SteppingStones, but for the entire community,” said the executive director of the nonprofit, located within Mylan Park, that provides recreation opportunities for children and adults with disabilities. “This is for mom, dad, kids, grandparents. There is no right or wrong way to play.”

She added that the all-inclusive, barrier-free playground will be one of the largest play areas of its kind in the region, offering ramps for accessibility, as well as designs meant to be compatible for those who use wheelchairs and walkers. There will also be sensory and music areas. It will be behind Miracle Field and across from SteppingStones. In addition to the playground, there will also be upgrades to Miracle Field itself, with play apparatuses constructed within its borders for athletes.

Right now, SteppingStones has roughly \$600,000 of its \$2 million goal for the project, thanks in part to the Monongalia Commission, which voted in 2022 to match up to \$300,000 in donations.

“With that much money, as well as the grants and foundations we’re waiting to hear back from, things are looking good,” Marietta said, though the organization still plans for local fundraising opportunities,



Submitted artist rendering

Plans are in the works for an adaptive playground at Mylan Park to be used by SteppingStones and the community.



The Dominion Post file photos

Community members and supporters gather around the expanded facility in 2022 during the ribbon-cutting for the Hazel & J.W. Ruby Community Center Sports Complex at Mylan Park. The center can host basketball tournaments as well as larger events and shows, such as the Winter Palooza below.



such as having pieces of equipment dedicated in honor or memory of individuals. Those interested can call the nonprofit to inquire at 304-983-7837.

“We’re working on a plan for demolition, here in the next month. And then

we can erect a sign saying it’s coming soon.”

Ideally, there will be a ribbon-cutting ceremony in the spring 2024.

“With tons of people coming to [Mylan Park] for different recreational things,” Marietta said, “like swim-

ming and diving, and with the campground and BMX track coming, the one component missing is an area to play, so it seems like a perfect time to launch this and bring it to fruition.”

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COLLABORATION

The Partnership strives for improvements

BY EVA MURPHY
Newsroom@DominionPost.com

Collaboration has been key for the Morgantown Area Partnership since the beginning. The Partnership was formed in 2019 to improve the business, economic and community development of the Morgantown area by getting people to work together on issues and opportunities, said President and CEO Russell Rogerson. The organization is governed by a 34-member board made up of individuals from education, government, private sector and businesses, both large and small. “It’s a great representation of the entire community,” Rogerson said. The challenges that have erupted since 2020 made the Partnership’s focus on collaboration even more critical. As the community emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic and faces diverse economic challenges, the organization consistently works to have a positive impact.

“Every community has challenges,” said Rogerson. “To take these on, we must work together. We’re seeing more and more of that now. That’s what excites me, because it benefits everyone. If we work together, this community can conquer and overcome any challenge.” The Partnership now includes Main Street Morgantown and works to revitalize the downtown area by increasing business density to bring more people downtown for dining, shopping and entertainment. “We want it to be walkable. We want it to be exciting. We want it to have multiple places for people to go,” Rogerson said. Safety concerns in the

“EVERY COMMUNITY HAS CHALLENGES. TO TAKE THESE ON, WE MUST WORK TOGETHER. WE’RE SEEING MORE AND MORE OF THAT NOW. THAT’S WHAT EXCITES ME, BECAUSE IT BENEFITS EVERYONE. IF WE WORK TOGETHER, THIS COMMUNITY CAN CONQUER AND OVERCOME ANY CHALLENGE.”
Russell Rogerson
President and CEO
The Partnership

downtown area received a lot of attention in 2022. In response, a joint task force created a safety strategy. “It may not be the be-all-end-all,” Rogerson admitted, “but we believe it represents a great step in the right direction of understanding that the vibrancy and safety of our community is a joint effort.” The safety strategy was officially adopted in February. “I think Main Street Morgantown is going to continue to do great things in 2023, and you’re going to see more progress made downtown,” Rogerson said. A strong economy is an indicator of community health, and the state of the economy is tied to the strength of the job market. “We work to grow jobs and invest in the community,” Rogerson said. “When you have a job that pays a strong living wage, you’re buying homes, shopping locally and spending locally. Every dollar that’s



The Morgantown Area Partnership brings together people — such as at this Business After Hours event — to network and work on improving business, economic and community development in the Morgantown area. Below, the Partnership President Russ Rogerson speaks at an awards ceremony.



earned locally turns over in the community economy five to seven times,” Rogerson said. “We’re trying to keep the economy healthy by cooperating with companies, entities and developers, and also finding out how we can bring more businesses to Morgantown.” Rogerson was happy to report economic growth in

the Morgantown area, including success in the WestRidge development, the University Town Centre and Mylan Park. Mountaintop Beverage, which was predicted to employ about 300 workers, began operations in 2022. An insulin manufacturing facility currently being built on land leased from WVU is expected to bring over 200 jobs to the region. While the Partnership empowers the community to work together to solve problems, it also encourages the community to celebrate its successes together as well. In April, it held the Annual Dinner, where local businesses and organizations were presented with awards in categories such as Small Business of the Year, Nonprofit of the Year and New Business of the Year.

“It’s important to be recognized by your peers and be appreciated for the value you bring to the community,” said Rogerson. “It’s a great time to celebrate and encourage others to do even better next year.”
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“I THINK MAIN STREET MORGANTOWN IS GOING TO CONTINUE TO DO GREAT THINGS IN 2023.”
Russ Rogerson

First Greene Mortgage holds Grand Opening for new Bridgeport office



We are proud to be your neighbors in Harrison County!

First Greene Mortgage celebrated the Grand Opening of its newest office in Bridgeport on Thursday, March 30. A Ribbon Cutting was held at 11 a.m. with the Harrison County Chamber of Commerce, followed by an Open House from 12-4 p.m. The new office is located at 3000 Jerry Dove Drive, Suite 300, in the Market Place shopping plaza. Food, refreshments, prizes, and giveaways were available, and the day featured a live broadcast by 102 WVAQ.



Special thanks to all invited guests, Great Harvest Bakery & Café of Bridgeport, Bonnie Belles Pastries, WVAQ Radio, WBOY 12 News, and (last but not least) the Harrison County Chamber for all the ribbon-cutting

coordination. Attendees also brought books for WVU Medicine Children’s Hospital patients as part of the day’s festivities. The Bridgeport office joins the Morgantown office (located at Suncrest Towne Centre) in serving West Virginia home loan customers. The offices offer residential purchase loans and refinancing, owner-builder loans, construction loans, FHA Title I home improvement loans, and home equity loans and lines of credit.

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3000 Jerry Dove Drive, Bridgeport
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304-598-0060

WVU

Cybersecurity lab provides hands-on learning for nation’s future cyber-defenders

BY DAVID BEARD
DBeard@DominionPost.com

A long, narrow room overlooking the Mon River in an upper floor of the John Chambers College of Business and Economics looks like an ordinary computer lab, but what goes on there is what you might find in a sci-fi novel, a spy movie or a detective show.

This is the Karen S. Evans Cybersecurity Lab, named for Karen Evans, a former assistant secretary for cybersecurity in the U.S. Department of Energy, who donated funds for the space.

It’s run by Christopher Ramezan, coordinator for the Business Cybersecurity Management Master’s of Science and minor programs.

The lab, he said, is designed to provide an environment for students to practice cybersecurity skills. It’s a self-contained environment. They don’t want their students out in the building where they could hack into places they shouldn’t.

Here, they can use the work stations to break into the server rack and to learn how to build defenses.

“To me, the best way to learn how to defend a system is to learn how to break it,” he said. They learn how by practicing on the red team of hackers, the blue team of defenders and the purple team that works together to test the security of their systems. The 20 computers simulate an actual business security operation center where staff monitor the entire enterprise.

Hackers work at the center station, defenders around the periphery. The setup isn’t complete yet, he

said. They’re working on fundraising to get more equipment.

Ramezan said he’s all about hands-on learning. “I could stand in front of a screen or chalkboard all day, drawing stuff, clicking on stuff, they’re passively listening to me, but to me they’re not really learning.” They have to have their hands on keyboards learning how to break stuff.

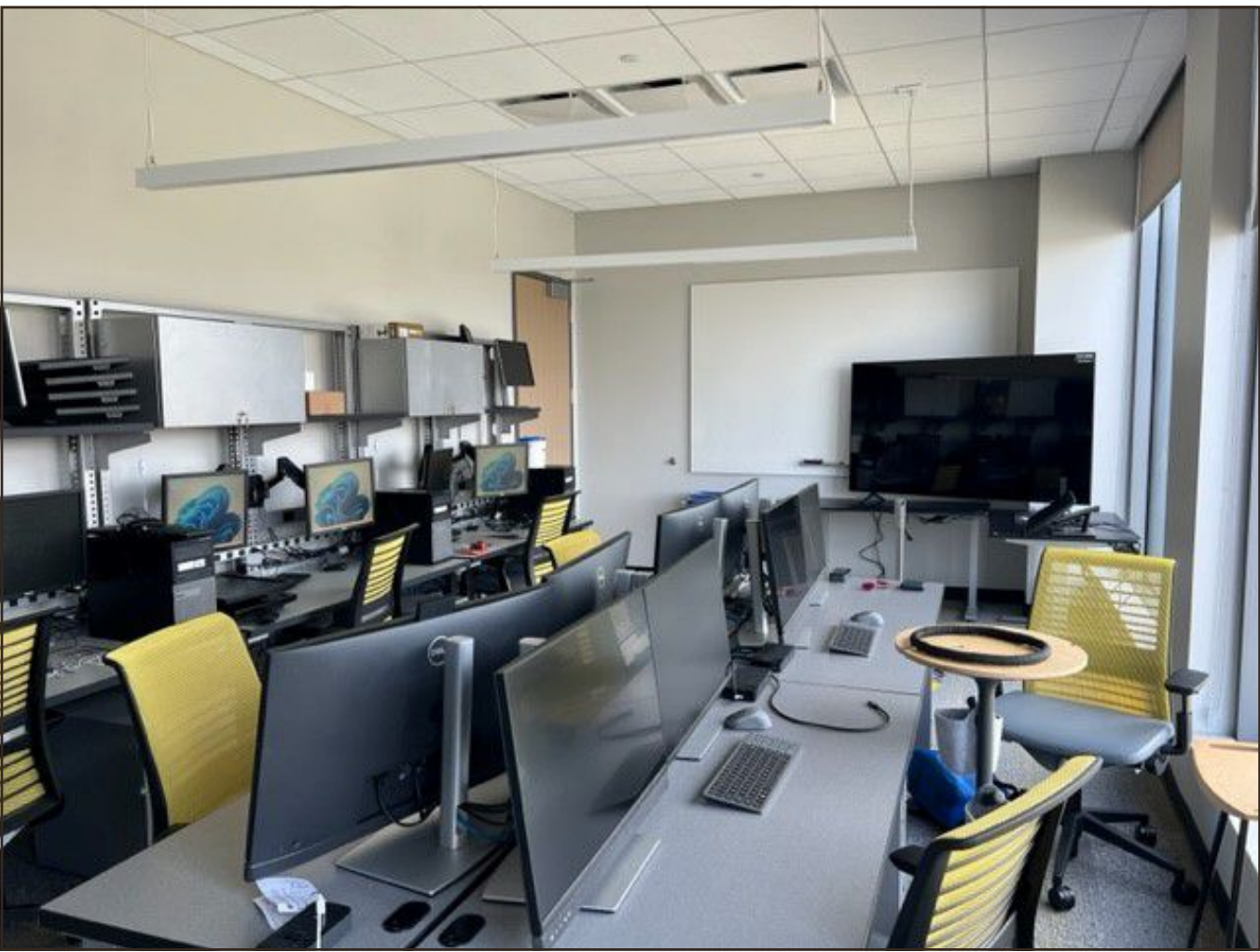
He explained that WVU’s cybersecurity program is split between the business school and the engineering school.

Chambers has an undergraduate minor in the Management Information Systems department with five classes or a cybersecurity concentration for the MIS bachelor’s; engineering has the bachelor’s in cybersecurity; Chambers has the 10-course master’s in cybersecurity; and engineering has the Ph.D.

The Chambers courses, he said, tend to be more applied while the engineering courses are more theoretical and mathematical. Students will take courses at both schools, and the two programs function as one big family. “It’s actually a good balance having the two.”

WVU’s cybersecurity prestige has allowed it to play host for several years to the international, multi-agency cyber competition Locked Shields. WVU students, teamed with some from Marshall and WVU Tech, compete along with personnel from the Defense Information Systems Agency, Department of Defense and the West Virginia National Guard.

In the past few years, he



The WVU cybersecurity lab.

said, WVU’s team has risen in the ranks of the competition. Three years ago, when it first hosted, it placed fourth, last year 14th and they’re waiting on this year’s scores.

“We’re trying to make WVU a leader in cybersecurity — that’s our mission,” he said. “Other universities are doing what we’re doing, but they’re not doing it to the same extent.”

This room is set up as a real security operation center. And they want to

get to the point they can hire students as staff to work in the lab and help manage the systems and infrastructure and build scenarios while they study for industry certifications.

“That’s going to set them on the path to be successful, and honestly, that’s what I care about.”

We need people to learn how to defend our systems from nation-state attackers and domestic criminals, he said, “There’s a huge skills gap in the field; there’s just not enough people to do the

work.” He came to WVU to help fill that workforce gap — 3 million jobs.

The whole MIS program, he said, has 220 students, about half of which are cybersecurity emphasis.

WVU, he said, is ideally located near D.C., Pittsburgh, Columbus, critical facilities and high-tech companies.

“I want WVU to become a true leader in cybersecurity that’s nationally recognized,” he said. Now, the names that come to mind are MIT, Carnegie Mellon

and Stanford. “I want WVU to be that fourth name on the list.”

TWEET @dbeardtdp

“WE’RE TRYING TO MAKE WVU A LEADER IN CYBERSECURITY — THAT’S OUR MISSION.”

Christopher Ramezan coordinator for the Business Cybersecurity Management programs

WVU

Lab offers an immersive view of the world of business

Students learn all about global supply chain — beginning to end

BY DAVID BEARD
DBeard@DominionPost.com

One of the phrases that became part of the daily conversation during COVID was “supply chain.” We talked about the ships stranded offshore, the shortages, the high prices.

Now we see a TV commercial with a young girl selling \$5 cups of lemonade. She explains to her shocked customer, “Supply chain issues.”

But there’s an incredible depth to those words, and the Wherle Global Supply Chain Lab at WVU’s John Chambers College of Business and Economics helps students explore the chain from beginning to end.

John Saldanha, Sears Chair in Global Supply Chain Management and lab director, talked about what makes up the supply chain — from raw materials to manufacturing, moving goods, managing supplies and fulfilling customer demands. Supply chain management involves, among other things, supply relationship management; sales and operations planning at various scales depending on the company; and customer relationship management with the vast amounts of data that requires.

A 17th century cobbler, he said, would have had the whole supply chain process in his head. Now it’s infinitely more complex and global. The lab aims to reduce some of the complexity, improve training and provide access to a larger group of people in a compelling and novel way.

Students can see the whole picture and choose areas they want to delve into and possibly work in —

whether that might be ethical sourcing; right-time, right-place optimization and manufacturing using economies of scale; customer relationships and needs through data analytics and other tools; or some other field.

Students are getting a new, first-hand look at all areas of the supply chain through virtual reality. They can don a headset and travel the world.

“We want to take our students to places they otherwise would not get the option to go to,” he said.

Last October, he visited a port in Alabama and recorded the loading of a container ship. He experienced a dizzying tour — from looking up from ground level to hundreds of feet in the air to peering through the windowed floor of a crane loading containers onto a ship.

Saldanha said he worked on a ship when he was studying supply chain management and was fortunate to learn about this portion first-hand — about 80% of items come in by ship.

Another VR tour they’re working on is for an ice cream factory in Pittsburgh, from the local farm that provides the cream to the production facility to the shops that sell it.

Students can see all the details instead of just listening to a lecture, he said, and this method of immersive learning vastly improves retention.

There are videos publicly available on YouTube but not listed yet — they want to build a library first.

All students in the business college take one core class in supply chain man-

SEE SUPPLY, I-15



John Saldha teaches in the Wehrle Supply Chain Lab in Reynolds Hall (above and at left).

WVU photos

WVU

Chambers College leads the way in analytics

Data trailblazes new future for W.Va. businesses

BY ANDREW MARVIN
WVU Business Magazine

Have you ever walked into a local business and thought, “Gee, this place sure could use a data scientist?”

Most people don’t — unless they’re students at the WVU Chambers College of Business and Economics.

In 2017, Matt Spencer, Kate Governale and Scott Branham were graduate students in the Business Data Analytics (BUDA) program. All three were West Virginia natives. All three had an eye for business development.

And, like the coal miners of old, all three saw an untapped vein in West Virginia’s economic landscape.

“It’s easy to think of data as only belonging to places that generate tons of it,” said Spencer, who led the charge. “With West Virginia’s size, it’s at a sweet spot where we can make a huge difference at an individual or community level.”

Every business, every day, processes an extraordinary amount of data. The number of products sold. The number of returning customers. The number of clicks on a single web link.

There are too many numbers to easily examine. Within them, however, are trends and patterns that businesses can use to form conclusions. In those conclusions lie the key to their growth.

Thus, data analytics: a field dedicated solely to processing and synthesizing all those numbers.

But businesses come in all sizes, and many don’t have a data analyst on staff. What’s more, they probably can’t afford to hire one.

Spencer, Governale and Branham decided to do something about it.

“The idea came from the culture we’d created in BUDA,” said Management Information Systems Professor Brad Price. “We’d work with companies and try to make a difference for them. The first step was showing students and organizations that this model could work.”

With Price’s help, the students molded their idea into Data Driven WV, one of the Chambers College’s research and outreach centers.

Data Driven WV fulfills the project’s original goal of providing West Virginia businesses with skilled data analysts, while also providing students with real-world experience to help them land jobs.

After its pilot year in 2019, Data Driven WV assisted with the state’s COVID response, creating forecasting models and digital inventory systems for personal protective equipment and vaccine distribution. Thanks to Price, it has also been able to work with large corporate partners

like WesBanco, Leidos and Noblis.

“Our corporate partners have been just phenomenal,” said Price. “Their willingness to expand, and to keep growing with us, has increased student buy-in. We have proof that what we do matters.”

That student buy-in is essential to the program’s success. Joshua Meadows, the director of Data Driven WV, believes a symbiotic relationship between the clients and the consultants is at the heart of its mission.

“I don’t want a student to ever have the academic knowledge, to have the skill set and not be able to land a job,” Meadows said. “I want them to have experiences they can talk about when they get to an interview.”

However, data isn’t generated by corporations alone. Businesses of any size can reap the rewards of data analytics — and when a small business comes knocking, Data Driven WV answers.

Quick wins

On June 20, 2022, an email landed in Meadows’ inbox. It was about a small business in Tucker County — one Meadows had never heard of — that wanted Data Driven WV’s help.

The name of that store was Bloom.

Opened in 2014, Bloom sells prints, shirts, stickers, graphic novels and more, all featuring designs from artists across the country. The products are arranged by artist, giving every nook and cranny of the store a unique aesthetic.

“We’re doing something very novel,” said Morgan Smith, Bloom’s owner. “We have over 1,000 prints from 50 contributors. I know of only one other print shop in the United States that’s doing this at the level we are.”

Walk through Bloom’s front door, and the first thing you’ll notice is the canopy of plants hanging from the ceiling. Then, if you look down, you’ll notice Smith’s dog, Ash, padding across the floor to greet you.

It’s the kind of warm, welcoming atmosphere you can only find in a small business in a small town — like Thomas, population 623.

Thomas, however, is a more challenging market than most. You only find it if you’re looking for it, and even then, getting there involves several hours of travel down narrow mountain roads.

Running a successful business in a town like Thomas means working hard to take care of the essentials, like placing orders and balancing budgets. Smith, however, wanted the store to reach its fullest potential. Even with a strong foundation, there was room to grow, and if Bloom was going to blossom, it would need help.

So Smith went looking for it. He reached out to Woodlands Development &



WVU photo

Bloom, in Tucker County, is using Data Driven WV to improve the business.

Lending, an organization dedicated to helping West Virginia’s small businesses grow, and was eventually connected with Data Driven WV.

“The Bloom project gives us the chance to show that we are here to provide data-driven solutions to the community, no matter how big or small the problem may seem,” said Meadows.

“In fact, it’s important that we work on projects of varying size and scope, because our students all have different interests and will work in different industries.”

Caleb Funderburk, a senior at Chambers, is one of those students. “It’s been really cool working with small business owners in West Virginia,” he said, “and getting to learn why they started the business and how we can help them grow.”

Funderburk is one member of the four-student team working with Bloom to redevelop its approach to doing business. That means starting small — but small things can amount to much more.

“What’s been really impressive so far is just the quick wins we get,” said Meadows. “The students have been able to share quick little tips and tricks with them, and it’s already saving them a quantifiable amount of time.”

It’s all about automation: instead of manually filling out spreadsheets and analyzing e-commerce reports, Data Driven WV is teaching Bloom how to make the computer systems work for it, synthesizing and sorting the otherwise-unmanageable numbers coming through Bloom’s systems every day.

“The outcome is to make their business processes more efficient,” said Funderburk, “so they can spend more time on a day-to-day basis growing the business,

and dedicate more time to what they love doing.”

Data Driven WV isn’t just transforming the businesses it works with — it’s transforming students like Caleb Funderburk, too.

Many students graduate from college with “hard skills,” which are technical, difficult to learn and applicable in specific circumstances. These are skills like data analysis, search engine optimization, HTML coding and finance management. They’re necessary to perform specific jobs in specific fields but aren’t always transferable to others.

Data Driven WV, however, allows students to also pick up “soft skills” like team leadership, conflict resolution and client management, which can be applied in many different ways in many different roles and industries.

After Funderburk had worked for Data Driven WV for a full year, its staffers recommended he take the lead on the Bloom project.

“It allowed me to gain experience I wouldn’t get anywhere else,” said Funderburk, “and led to me getting other internships that I work at now.”

As project manager, Funderburk is learning how to organize his team to tackle problems. In his role, he’s the primary point of contact for Bloom and develops the methodology they use for improving Bloom’s systems.

“This is my first client engagement where I’m having this project management experience,” said Funderburk. “This provided me with the first real-world opportunity to utilize the skills I’ve been developing.”

When Funderburk’s team visited Bloom for an in-person meeting in September, they approached it as though they were professional consultants. They walked through the experience of a typical customer,

then dove into the store’s digital presence, all the while suggesting improvements for everything from the store’s point-of-sale to its social media and e-commerce presence.

“The all-around experience has been really positive,” Smith said, “and surprising, as someone who isn’t around college students very often. I wasn’t expecting the level of maturity I’ve seen from them. My manager, Alexa, and I are endlessly impressed and excited.”

Mountains moving forward

Bloom is just one business. There are many like it throughout West Virginia — many that are bigger, and no less in need of data analytics assistance.

But Data Driven WV’s biggest client isn’t a single business. It’s the entire state.

“When we talk to companies about what West Virginia has to offer, Data Driven always comes up,” said Price, who continues to bring in corporate partners for Data Driven WV.

“It’s multinationals, startups, companies that have been here for 20 years, companies that want to get started here, everything in between.

“The students these companies are looking at are the ones they’re going to pay to work on their projects next year. These are the people they want to work with, so they can get early access to them.”

That’s exactly what Scott Branham, one of the three students who founded Data Driven WV, was hoping to achieve when the center was created.

“We wanted to build a pipeline for the students,” Branham said, “whether they were undergraduates or graduates, to marry capable, qualified, passion-

“WE WANTED TO ... MARRY CAPABLE, QUALIFIED, PASSION-ATE STUDENTS ... WITH COMPANIES THAT NEEDED THAT WORK DONE AND TO CREATE THOSE PARTNERSHIPS AUTHENTICALLY.”

Scott Branham
Data Driven WV co-founder

ate students from Chambers with companies that needed that work done and to create those partnerships authentically.”

Branham is now a program manager at Honeywell but remains heavily involved with Data Driven WV, working with Meadows and Price to chart the program’s course. He hopes the students currently working with Data Driven WV will follow the example he sets in giving back.

“There are needs statewide,” Branham said. “One day, I want to walk into Data Driven WV and see a map of our state with at least 55 pins in it — one for every county.

“We have students in our college who want to do good things in the places they’re from. For them to be able to brainstorm and work on a project in their home county and manage and execute it for college credit — and potentially work on it as an employee one day — that, to me, is the ultimate success story.”

For Branham, it’s all about giving back, whether that means mentoring current students or helping a local cupcake shop grow its profit margins.

That’s the spirit that led to Data Driven WV’s creation: looking boldly to the future but reaching back to help others along.

That’s the spirit of the Chambers College.

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Questions: 304-291-9425

WEST VIRGINIA

Mon among those leading state in new business growth for April

Newsroom@DominionPost.com

The West Virginia Secretary of State's Office registered 1,197 new businesses statewide during the month of April, according to Secretary of State Mac Warner.

Tyler County led the state in the percentage of new business growth through April, with a total of eight new business registrations — a 2.52% increase.

The Secretary of State's Business & Licensing Division reported that Summers, Lincoln, Mercer and Mingo Counties also experienced notable growth during the month.

A total of 14 new busi-

ness entities were registered in Summers County in April. Lincoln County successfully registered eight businesses. Mercer County reported 50 registrations for the month and Mingo County registered 17 new businesses with the Secretary of State's Office.

Counties that lead the state in total businesses registered for April were Kanawha, Berkeley, Monongalia, Jefferson and Cabell.

Kanawha County successfully registered 142 businesses, while Berkeley County reported 114 new registrations.

Monongalia County had 83 businesses register.

Jefferson County registered 61 new businesses, while Cabell County totaled 61 new registrations for the month.

Statewide, West Virginia registered 13,090 new businesses in the previous 12-month period, from May 1, 2022, to April 30, 2023.

Berkeley County led all 55 counties with an 18.86% growth rate during the one-year timespan.

To review county-by-county growth, visit <https://apps.sos.wv.gov/business/BSR/Reports/CountySummary?BeginDate=2023-04-01&EndDate=2023-04-30&sort=Growth>

COUNTY

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earlier this year, indicating the intent of each to cover equal \$3,687,667 portions of a \$14 million upgrade of water and sewer infrastructure servicing areas, including

WORKS

FROM PAGE I-10

is all the infrastructure — the water, sanitary, stormwater, gas, electric, roads — for the expansion to not only get ready for Mountaintop and MECCA, but for what's coming down the road as the park

WestRidge and the greater Chaplin Hill area.

Meanwhile, on the other side of town, the county is working with Enrout Properties on the construction of a new 911 call center and garage in the Morgantown Industrial Park.

The commission is also

working with the developer and the state on the construction of a new Harmony Grove interchange off I-79, allowing direct interstate access to the expanded industrial park and its newest tenant, Mountaintop Beverage.

TWEET @DominionPostWV

SAFETY

FROM PAGE I-9

of stakeholders, including private entrepreneurs, city officials, Monongalia County, WVU, Morgantown Area Partnership and others to reimagine South High Street, the city's Wharf District and riverfront amenities.

Downs points to the

investment in the new Hotel Morgan and the multi-million dollar effort underway to overhaul the Historic Post Office building as momentum.

He also includes the Warner Theatre, which he co-owns with Rich Brant.

The 18,500-square-foot theater first opened in 1931, but has been dark since September 2010.

Downs said that is going to change.

"It'll be more of a convention space than a traditional theater because we want to be distinctly different than the Met. I mean that in a good way, in order to just provide more options for our community," he said.

TWEET @DominionPostWV

WESTOVER

FROM PAGE I-4

over's sewer system is broken and needs to be a top priority for the city.

The city is in the process of finalizing a funding package to address both Holland Avenue and the Dents Run pump station.

The combined cost of the projects has been estimated at \$8.25 million, about \$3.8 million of which will need to be

financed through the department of environmental protection over 20 years at 3% interest.

The rest will come covered by the city's American Rescue Plan Act dollars (\$1.9 million), anticipated grant funding from the West Virginia Water Development Authority (\$2 million) and contributions from the county and state.

Smith said the city is also in the running to

receive federal earmarks for the project through Sen. Joe Manchin's office. If ultimately received, likely in late 2024 or early 2025, that money could be used to pay down or pay off the loan.

The city has already implemented one sewer rate increase in support of these projects with a second, larger increase coming once the projects near completion.

TWEET @DominionPostWV

STAR

FROM PAGE I-6

replacement for Reid, who stepped down in March due to health concerns. He wasn't available for comment for this story.

Living in Star City, Doyle said, means community, continuity and history.

Generations ago, the town boasted a number of glass factories, and one, Davis-Lynch is still in operation.

"One of the few in West Virginia," she said. "That's a lost art."

The only thing better than living amidst all this history, she said, is writing it.

"We're a community," Doyle said. "We're a neighborhood."

With all the community touches.

This July means the Farmers Market and Star City Community Yard Sale. And while it's still

LIVING IN STAR CITY, DOYLE SAID, MEANS COMMUNITY, CONTINUITY AND HISTORY.

being worked out, this December will mean a visit from a certain jolly gent known for his toy-giving altruism.

"We're bringing the Christmas Parade back."

TWEET @DominionPostWV

SUPPLY

FROM PAGE I-13

agement, Saldana said. There's also a nine-course major for students who want careers in the field. And they're in the process of hiring a fourth faculty member, which will allow them to start exploring graduate degrees to offer as soon as next year.

Beyond serving WVU students, they want to engage in outreach and provide resources free to all West Virginia businesses and residents to help them

understand what supply chain management is, Saldanha said. They want to attract students into the program, train company employees through VR and help West Virginia businesses understand this aspect of their business.

They're working with two companies now and hope to hear from others, he said. "We want to advertise this as much as possible." They're creating curriculum to attract high school talent and are generating some VR games, along the lines of Supply Chain Tycoon.

VR is just one element of their overall program, Saldanha said — the "new shiny object." But the program has three primary aims: education; ensuring that their work is impactful through research and outreach, to make West Virginia businesses more competitive; and ensuring the program reflects the principles of the John Chambers College of Business and Economics and WVU, to contribute to the prestige and success of the university.

TWEET @DominionPostWV



WVU photo

Annie Cui is the marketing chair at the WVU Chambers College of Business and Economics.

GLOBAL

FROM PAGE I-10

Ph.D. in marketing," she said. "Marketing is the key to success in any business. If you have a wonderful product, you cannot just put it on the shelf or online and assume people will be drawn to it naturally. You have to get the word out and let people know the benefits and value your product can provide."

After earning her doctorate at Kent State, Cui began her job search. There was interest from WVU, and coincidentally, West Virginia had already carved out a special place in her heart.

Country roads took her home — even though she'd never set foot in the Mountain State.

"'Country Roads' is one of the most recognized American songs in China," Cui said. "Everyone knows it — my parents' generation, my generation, even the younger generation. The song always had a special place in my heart because it's so beautiful, and it makes you feel homesick."

Cui visited the WVU campus and was instantly sold, joining the faculty in 2008. She credits everyone in the college and her department for helping her adjust in those first few years on campus, particularly her mentor, Paula Fitzgerald, marketing professor.

"You can testify to the truly nice people who are here," she said. "Everyone makes you feel at home, and that's the whole concept of being a Mountaineer to me."

Going global

Since her arrival to WVU, Cui has made an impact in the research areas of brand management and international marketing. But her work has transcended research and into teaching and service.

Look no further than her export management class. In this experiential learning course, Cui and her students — a mix of graduate and undergraduate — work with West Virginia businesses in hopes of expanding their footprint into the international market.

One success is the Fiesta Tableware Co. The family-owned business located to Newell (Hancock County) in the early 1900s and had always had a presence in the U.S. market, particularly in the region. Ask anyone in West Virginia about Fiestaware, and they know exactly what you're talking about. However, the company recognized its domestic-only approach limited its reach and potential.

That realization came to fruition after Cui and her students visited the factory and saw firsthand how Fiesta operated. Through the class, students helped launch Fiesta products in Mexico.

Worldwide expansion doesn't stop with Fiesta.

"All in all, we have helped more than 70 West Virginia companies go global," Cui said. "It's amazing to see these companies become first-time exporters. They're realizing there's a vast market

elsewhere, not only in the U.S., and it's nothing to be intimidated about. We help ease any fears or perceived risks they have of going global."

Cui works closely with the District Export Council of West Virginia, small business groups and government entities throughout the state in identifying companies she and her students can assist with their international strategy.

Many small businesses are "resource constrained," she said; therefore they cannot implement the same strategies as larger companies.

"I've studied small- and mid-sized enterprises and found it's effective to find countries that are culturally similar to their home base," Cui said. "They often find a niche in those markets and are guaranteed more success."

"So this class really is a demonstration of the meaningful impact students can make when given the opportunity to work hand-in-hand with businesses. It inspires me, and other marketing faculty, to incorporate these unique, experiential learning opportunities into our classes."

Faux is no foe to many consumers

The COVID-19 pandemic altered life as we know it in countless ways. That includes the market for luxury brands and counterfeit items, as Cui's recent research indicates.

With the economy and consumers' wallets taking a hit during the pandemic, the need to buy luxury products dwindled, she said. People simply did not have the disposable income to splurge on upscale brands of prestige.

Cui found that more and more consumers started purchasing copycat brands — and they did so fully aware that what they were buying was fake.

Everything from phony, knockoff Rolexes to Louis Vuitton bags are increasingly being scooped up as people think, " 'Well, I cannot afford the real thing, but it's OK if I buy a fake that looks like it for a fraction of the cost,' " Cui said. "It's amazing. The last time I looked at the data, the counterfeit luxury business was a \$98 billion industry. It's quite interesting that people knowingly purchase these fake products."

"Combating the manufacture and supply of counterfeits has not been effective," Cui said. "My research suggests that anti-counterfeiting efforts should aim to reduce consumers' demand for counterfeit luxury products. Brand managers can design ads that highlight the psychological and social risks associated with luxury counterfeit shopping and trigger counterfeit shoppers' shame and guilt to discourage their counterfeit consumption."

Cui's research and contribution to the marketing academic profession have earned her recognition within and beyond WVU. In 2019, Cui was named the Kmart Chair in Marketing, and in 2022, she was named the managing editor of the Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice, the first

high-quality general marketing journal to require the pairing of academic research contributions with high potential for application of findings by marketing practitioners.

Leading into the future

In 2022, Cui embarked on a new endeavor within the college as the marketing chair, replacing Michael Walsh, who is now associate dean for assessment and assurance learning and chair of the new General Business department. Luckily for Cui, the role is not too intimidating, as she believes the college has retained its collegial charm since she arrived here in 2008.

"Marketing has grown to be one of the largest majors in the Chambers College, thanks to Michael Walsh's leadership and our faculty's efforts," Cui said. "I couldn't imagine working anywhere else because of how supportive and collegial our marketing department is."

One new initiative is the marketing DBA program, spearheaded by Cui and three other marketing faculty, Jody Crosno, Xinchun Wang and Julian Givi, which is expected to roll out this fall.

"We see that there's a potential market for the DBA program because of our interaction with businesses," Cui said. "We have a professional sales program, led by David Brauer, that has been successful nationally, and there's always inquiries from business executives asking, 'Do you have a DBA program?'"

Cui also aims for the department to continue delivering quality education to its students and affording them the tools to gain meaningful employment after graduation.

"Our faculty is invested in students' success," she said. "One of our newer faculty, Julian Givi, for instance, has led the American Marketing Association student chapter and has brought so many creative ideas. As we are coming out of COVID, it has been challenging to enhance student engagement. He had students set up a table in front of the pedestrian bridge to the PRT to get people involved in the AMA chapter. They got over 120 signups in one day."

Cui also noted that faculty are now actively engaged on LinkedIn, where they connect with students to assist with career opportunities.

Despite her successes and accolades in the higher education and marketing fields, she remains humble and remembers those times she was a student herself.

"Not long ago, it was the 20th anniversary of me entering the U.S. to pursue a master's degree," Cui said. "It took a lot of guts for me to come to the U.S. with only two suitcases and everything in the rearview mirror. I've had students, including immigrant students, stop me and thank me for sharing my story. Those moments really warm my heart and make me feel thankful that I even get to do this job."

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