

Changes, celebrations, new faces sum up the year

It may be past and a fading memory but 2023 was quite a year in Franklin County!

Here's a comprehensive look back on the year and all the events that made those 12 months a year to remember. It was also a year of change, celebrations, and the belated completion of improvements to a major highway project that has been years in the making.

Here's a month by month look back at some of the important events — and the people who helped make our overall community a great place to live.

JANUARY

•In an effort to attract and retain emergency medical services staff, the Franklin County Board of Commissioners agreed to raise employee pay by 10 percent.

•Louisburg Mayor Christopher Neal and community stalwart Johnnie Clifton Sr. received President's Lifetime Achievement Awards during the town of Louisburg's Jan. 9 meeting.

•A Jan. 15 house fire in Centerville claimed the life of Cameron Burnette. Burnette is believed to have rushed into the house to save family members he thought were still inside. Burnette died as a result of his injuries about a week later.

•Youngsville Officers Barrington Simpson and Gabriel Fanara were recognized during the town's Jan. 12 meeting for going above and beyond the call.

Youngsville recognized two officers who went above and beyond the call.

In December, they responded to a distress call and found a woman in her car in need of assistance.

They helped her back into her home, where they found her in need of household items and groceries.

They also discovered that the woman had intended to go to the hair salon and grocery store before officers arrived, but she was unable to operate her vehicle.

They purchased groceries for her and also arranged for an all-expenses-paid visit to the hair salon — where the woman was intending to go before she found herself in distress.

•Franklin County chose MESCO, a Garner-based civil and sanitary engineer-

ing company to provide the final design work and construction oversight for the newly proposed trash convenience site in Youngsville — at 2275 Long Mill Road.

•The Franklin County Animal Services Advisory Board held a meeting — the first for the newly reconstituted service board that was disbanded in 2012.

FEBRUARY

•The family and friends of Hamilton Woods Jr. held a press conference following the initial court appearance of Gavin Lloyd Miller and Dillon Thomas, the two teens accused of killing him.

Legal representatives for the family pushed for State Bureau of Investigation involvement as one of the suspects was alleged to have had ties to a previous courthouse employee.

Ultimately, the SBI was not called in, but the local district attorney's office did agree to bring in a special prosecutor.

The cases against the duo remain pending.

•Bunn tabbed Audrey Hartsfield as its newest town commissioner. Hartsfield was picked to fill the unexpired term of community stalwart and Commissioner Mack Jones — who died in December 2023 at the age of 72.

Hartsfield was sworn in during the board's March meeting.

•Franklin County's Economic Development Office prepared for a change in leadership as Richie Duncan confirmed she was retiring — after nearly 20 years in the office, her last six as director.

Ultimately, the county tabbed Barbara Fiedor for the post in October.

At the time of Duncan's departure, Franklin County plucked Monique Wilkins from her post as Louisburg's economic development coordinator to be the county's economic development specialist.

•Louisburg officials, in an abrupt move, began paving the way to move town hall into the Depot Hill building.

Before February, a number of ideas and opportunities had been explored concerning the potential use of Depot Hill, but at the town's meeting, officials said



RECOGNITION. Officers Gabriel Fanara and Barrington Simpson, second and third from left, received certificates for their service from Chief Greg Whitley and Mayor Fonzie Flowers. (Contributed photo)

that moving town hall to the Depot Hill location was a possibility.

Prior to that meeting, that possibility had never been discussed.

•A grand jury indicted Gavin Miller, the teen suspected of firing the gun that killed Hamilton Woods, on a charge of first degree murder.

The other suspect, Dillon Piper, is alleged to have been the getaway driver and was charged with felony accessory after the fact.

MARCH

•Veterans vehemently protested the potential move of the county's Veterans Services office to a less desirable location.

County officials and staff listened as the office remains in its current location.

•NC State basketball legend Dereck Whittenburg visited Louisburg to pres-



Bunn Mayor Marsha Strawbridge and Audrey Hartsfield

ent the family of Quinton Leonard with a plaque, recognizing his contributions as a reserve player on the 1983 national championship team.

Leonard's family was unable to make it to the 40th-year celebration at PNC in Raleigh, so Whittenburg visited Franklin County to recognize Mobley and his family.

•Franklin County farmer Julius Griffin was announced as a finalist for the state's Small Farmer of the Year award.

For the past decade or so, Julius Griffin has been working about 180 acres along N.C. 39, converting organic offerings into cold-pressed juices and wellness shots.

Griffin did not win, but the recognition was well deserved.



PACK PRIDE. NC State's Dereck Whittenburg, right of portrait, presented the family of Louisburg native Quinton Leonard with a plaque and other memorabilia, recognizing his place on the 1983 national championship basketball team.



Julius Griffin

LOUISBURG COLLEGE

Proud to be a part of the Franklin County community for **237** years

WWW.LOUISBURG.EDU

Established in 1870

The Franklin Times

www.thefranklintimes.com

P.O. Box 119 • 109 S. Bickett Blvd., Louisburg, NC

919-496-6503

Established in 1918

Richardson Funeral Home

Specializing in Funeral Service & Insurance Needs

~ Family of Licensed Practitioners ~

Geraldine C. Richardson • Herbert C. Richardson

Stacy A. Richardson • Tabatha D. Richardson

Cyrus Richardson

607 SOUTH MAIN ST LOUISBURG, NC (919) 496-4731

204 NORTH ALSTON ST NASHVILLE, NC (252) 459-3361

Established in 1936

Cooper Insurance

919-496-4138

AFFORDABLE INSURANCE

Auto • Home • Business

209 COURT ST., LOUISBURG, N.C.

Established in 1951

Hodges INSURANCE AGENCY

Louisburg, NC

496-5155

Established in 1951

LOUISBURG TRACTOR

1931 Highway 401 S • Louisburg

919-496-3594

www.louisburgtractor.com

Established in 1957

Strickland Auto Supply

344 S. Bickett Blvd., Louisburg

(919)496-4122

Hours: M-F: 7:30am-6pm, Sat.: 7:30am-1pm

Established in 1958

Proudly serving the area for 66 Years!

RUSTIC BUILDING SUPPLY

85 NC 561 Hwy., Louisburg, NC

919-496-5726

APRIL

•Franklin County pledged \$1 million to build a half mile road and extend water and sewer to their Triangle North Franklin Business Park.

The extension of utilities is designed to open up a new phase of development at the park, which sits adjacent to the county's Triangle North Executive Airport.

•The developer of Louisburg Falls — a mixed use development of residential, commercial and professional properties — notified the Louisburg town council that they would be scaling back the development — to a primary residential use.

Developer Ken Van Liew told council members that between the time he pitched the project in 2021 to the spring of 2023, local and national economies made the project as originally presented virtually impossible to complete.

The town council balked at scaling the project back, which left the town and the developer at a standstill.

Ultimately, the town and Van Liew reached a compromise that still allows for a mix of uses at the 45-acre site at the intersection of Fox Park Road and U.S. 401.

•The Louisburg Town Council agreed to sell a town-renovated building at 109 N. Church Street.

The town purchased the neglected building years ago and renovated it, renting it to generate revenue.

The council, though, voted to put the building up for sale.

•Franklinton Police Chief James Davis Jr. presented Officer Gerald Gratz with a certificate, recognizing his life-saving efforts.

In March, Gratz responded to a call with a woman threatening suicide and offered her comfort while medical staff responded and treated her.



RECOGNIZED. Franklinton Police Chief James Davis Jr. left, recognized Officer Gerald Gratz for his life-saving efforts.



Will Hinton

MAY

•Bunn commissioners agreed to raise rates for water, sewer and garbage, as well as fees for zoning permits.

The May 1 decision to raise water and sewer rates, officials said, was to keep up with the increased cost of the service.

Garbage rates, officials said, were raised to keep up with rising cost and to keep the town from going in the hole on the enterprise service.

Zoning fees were raised to cover town costs and put them more in line with their governmental neighbors.

•Louisburg College hosted a retirement celebration for art professor Will Hinton, who spent 40 years at the college.

•Long-time Louisburg business, Pruitt Lumber Company, announced it would close its doors in the summer.

•Cedar Creek Middle School student Madison Campella, 12, was killed in a wreck on U.S. 1.

Authorities allege a 16-year-old may have been racing at the time when his Mustang crashed into the vehicle Campella was riding in.

Authorities allege the driver, identified through court documents as Youngsville resident Chase Ashton Davis, was driving about 95 mph in a 55-mph zone and was not using his headlights at the time of the wreck — about 10:20 p.m.

•The Franklin County sheriff's office recognized officers who made life-saving efforts, and others who earned promotions.

Two of them were Sgt. Kevin Livesay and Dep. Avery Wilder.

The two responded to a cardiac arrest call in Bunn on March 22, said Franklin County Sheriff's Office Chief Deputy Ken Pike, who served as master of ceremony.

They found a man unresponsive with no pulse and they began chest compressions until EMS arrived.

Their efforts, Pike said, "were credited with being an integral part in saving" a life.

Dep. Jamie Vaughan Jr. was also recognized for his life-saving efforts.

On April 8, Vaughan responded to a critical incident involving an overdose, administering two doses of Narcan and performing chest compressions until EMS arrived.

•Resident Bertha Crudup, 81, and her dog died in a house fire on Harris Way — east of Franklinton.

According to authorities, deputies responded to the home before 10 p.m. on May 25 to find it fully engulfed in flames.

Family and neighbors advised them that a woman — later identified as Crudup — was trapped inside.

Sgt. Andrew Ayscue and Detective Tyler Johnson were able to make entry into a side door of the residence and located Crudup unresponsive and collapsed on the floor



FISHY. Tick Hudgins, just left of the marlin, was part of Sensation's team at the Big Rock Blue Marlin Tournament. A ruling by organizers cost the team a split of more than \$3 million.

inside.

The deputies were able to carry Crudup outside and they immediately began CPR on her until medical personnel arrived.

Crudup was pronounced dead at the scene and was transported to the NC Medical Examiner's Office in Raleigh. A dog inside the home also died.

JUNE

•After being assailed for their proposed budget, county management and officials agreed to pull more money from its savings account to fully fund the school system's operating expenses.

The decisions were a result of County Manager Kim Denton's decision to revise her budget proposal — a revelation she shared after the county received nearly 100 comments through its budget portal — primarily imploring the county to fully fund the school system's request.

And, the revelation was made prior to a scheduled public hearing that packed the county's meeting space, and surrounding hallway, lobby and office spaces with educators, parents and others waiting for their chance to "fight for education."

•The State Board of Transportation adopted its latest 10-year transportation plan, keeping the latest portion of improvements for U.S. 401 on track.

Months later, transportation and state leg-

islators were on hand for the ribbon-cutting ceremony for improvements to Section C — from the Wake County line to Royal.

The project was delayed and millions of dollars over budget.

•By split vote, with Council members Tom Clancy, Mark Russell and Silke Stein voting no, the town approved its 2023-24 budget.

The budget comes at a cost to Louisburg residents.

First, the town property tax rate increased 5 cents per \$100 of valuation beginning on July 1. That put the town's rate at 50 cents per \$100 of valuation.

For the owner of a \$250,000 home in town, the tax bill rose from \$1,125 to \$1,250 with the new rate. That makes the cost of the increase about \$10.42 a month or \$125 per year.

Also, solid waste (garbage) collection rates increased \$4 per household.

The budget also included pay hikes for most town employees.

The budget also created three new positions: a human resources generalist; a water treatment plant operator and an electric line technician.

The council also agreed to stop receiving the \$100 per month stipend they have been receiving, effective July 1, but the mayor will continue to receive his \$200 per month stipend.

•Local fisherman Tick Hudgins was at the center of a whopping controversy with the Big Rock Blue Marlin Tournament.

The Franklinton resident was part of the Sensation team that hauled in what appeared to have been the winning fish, but organizers disqualified it, claiming it was mutilated by shark bites — disqualifying it from competition.

The decision cost team members a split of \$3.5 million.

•A superior court judge denied a convicted killer's motion that could have granted him a new trial and a chance at freedom.

On June 20, Senior Resident Superior Court Judge John Dunlow ruled that none of the issues raised by Garry Yarborough about his 2018 sentence or subsequent appeals would have changed the outcome of his case — a guilty verdict and life sentence plus 40 years.

Yarborough will have to fulfill that sentence for killing Tracy Williams in the summer of 2015.



OUT OF BUSINESS. BB Pruitt held a piece of yellow pin decking material, the chief product of Pruitt Lumber. The company shut down after more than a century.

Established in 1969

Choose your style & fabric

CRAFTMASTER

PAULA DEEN

catnapper

Lift Chairs and Recliners

WOOD'S HOME FURNISHINGS

228 RONALD THARRINGTON RD., LOUISBURG

919-496-3101

woodshomefurnishings.com

Established in 1971

Richards Oil Company Inc.

2063 NC 39 Highway North
Louisburg, NC

919-496-3381 • richardsoil@aol.com

GAS • NON ETHANOL GAS • K1
HWY DIESEL • NON HWY DIESEL

Established in 1975

LOUISBURG
HEALTHCARE & REHABILITATION CENTER
Caring with Excellence

LOUISBURG MANOR
Caring with Excellence

LHRC 919-496-2188 • LM 919-496-6084

Established in 1976

5-Star Center

St. Paul's Child Care Center

919-496-2069

928 S. Main St. • Louisburg

Established in 1978

novozymes

Rethink Tomorrow

77 Perry Chapel Church Road
Franklinton, NC • (919) 494-3000

www.novozymes.com

Established in 1979

SMITH INSULATION, INC.

780 E.F. Cottrell Rd.
Louisburg, NC 27549

919-496-3512

Established in 1982

MOSS FOODS

812 S. Bickett Blvd, Louisburg

919-496-3696

mossfoodsinc.com

Established in 1982

Wammock Utility Buildings

www.wammockutilitybuildings.com

RENT-TO-OWN

401 Kenmore Ave., Louisburg

919-496-2061

We Deliver

MasterCard VISA

BBB

JULY

•July kicked off with lots of celebrations, fun and explosions as the county celebrated the nation's birthday. Fireworks exploded in the night skies in both Franklinton and Louisburg -- and as usual the community of Alert held the county's only Independence Day parade, complete with an appearance by Uncle Sam.

•The Youngsville Fire Department kicked off full emergency response coverage even as Franklin County and its fire departments were trying to work out a new program that better met local needs.

•In Bunn, the town's decision to demolish a house it deemed dilapidated was called into question. The home's owner called the town board's action nefarious and deceptive.

•During the second week of the month, it was learned that Franklin County has been paying a lobbyist \$20,000 a month in the search for water. The payments had actually begun months earlier and already tallied \$200,000 by the time the deal became public knowledge.

•An agreement was reached in court keeping the Louisburg convenience store known as In N Out closed for the rest of the month. Town officials contended the store was a front for the sale of controlled substances and prostitution.

•The filing period for municipal elections opened with several candidates tossing their hats into the ring almost immediately.

•By the third week of the month, New York developer Kenneth Van Liew had made enough tweaks to the huge Louisburg Falls mixed use development that it was approved by the Louisburg town board.

•The county filed a lawsuit in its efforts to acquire the troubled warehouse space at 424 T. Kemp Road. Although the county had agreed to buy the property, problems with getting a clear title forced the issue into the courts where it is still unresolved.

•Youngsville swore in its first-ever town manager, Nathan Page. The position was formalized earlier after the state General Assembly approved a new charter earlier in the month.

•By the end of the month, several contested elections had shaped up and a new documentary film put the plight of the homeless under a lens.

•Also at the end of the month, the Franklin County Arts Council decided to close its office in Louisburg and scale back on its artistic reach.

•Franklinton got a clean bill of financial health after it controlled the deficiencies that auditors had pointed out earlier.

AUGUST

•Although homes in Franklin County were considered among the least expensive in the Raleigh area that was changing. Over the previous five years, cost of housing here has risen by some of the highest percentages in the region. Youngsville was listed as having the eighth most expensive housing options in the metro area at \$402,984.

•Residents renewed their push for action to improve animal welfare and pushed the county to revive the animal services advisory board and improve the situation at the local animal shelter.

•A 71-year-old Franklinton woman who was reported missing was found, mired in mud near a pond. She was quickly rescued thanks to a multi-agency response.

•The county, which had purchased the old Louisburg Theater building, declared it was time to turn out the lights -- and destroy the historic structure. That decision was based on a recommendation from an engineering and architectural firm, a recommendation that was later discovered to be based on incorrect research.

•Animal welfare advocates began calling for the firing of the county's shelter director.

•The county held another of its popular



A FAIR HONOR. Katelyn and Brandon Welch, of Hidden Acres Farm, were selected as a State Fair Farm Family of the Day at the North Carolina State Fair last year. They're pictured with their children, Michael and Jonathan.

and successful Horse Farm Tours.

•County officials announced a huge pay raise for county employees, especially for those in animal services and Emergency Medical Services. The price tag was more than a half million for the first fiscal year.

•A local man, Francis (Frank) Johnson was killed while delivering propane fuel to a tobacco farm. The incident was ruled an accident.

•County rescue crews held a training exercise at Lake Royale and practiced the correct way to handle accident/crime scenes.

•A lawsuit over a suspicious fire at 111 N. Church Street, Louisburg, was dropped after an agreement was reached out of court. Details of the settlement were not

made available and the house has since been torn down.

•Franklinton approved another 50-unit planned development over the concerns of some residents.

•Lorenzo Stancil of Franklin County was named Special Olympics Athlete of the Year. He has been very active in the program for years.

•Some residents were pushing to save the Louisburg Theater building but the county did not act on their requests.

SEPTEMBER

•Franklin County Schools presented county commissioners with a projection of 10 years worth of capital expense needs approaching nearly \$100 million over regular school district expenses but commissioners have taken no steps toward meeting those anticipated needs.

•The county launched a \$2.3 million long-term water needs study.

•The county marked the Sept. 11 terrorist attack -- and the featured speaker was a man who was in the Pentagon that morning.

•Franklin County Schools got a very positive report from the state -- and the Early College High School earned another A grade.

•A Louisburg man, Wesley Earl Johnson, 62, was charged with murder in the shooting death of 36-year-old Louisburg man, Terrence Maurice Strickland.

•A county hearing about a proposed cell phone tower descended into chaos.

•The Louisburg town council couldn't decide where to hold its regular meetings as crowds attending the sessions were over-filling the town hall meeting room.

•Developers of a 110-acre, 1.4 million-square-foot business park near Youngsville said they expect to have tenants in place and be complete with the first of three phases by the spring of this year.

•Operators of the Maria Franklin emergency department provided commissioners with a brighter outlook now that the COVID-19 pandemic seemed to be past. Both emergency room and outpatient visits were up during 2023 as were admissions to the behavioral health facility.

•Franklinton leaders said they liked the light rail concept -- but told officials, "don't cut our town in half."



IT'S A GO. Developer Kenneth Van Liew was all smiles as he held up a drawing of what a portion of the Louisburg Falls development will look like. Van Liew, who is based in New York City, had been working to get approval for the \$110-million plus mixed use development for more than a year -- and in July the Louisburg Town Council gave its unanimous approval to zoning changes that should pave the way for the project.

Established in 1983



BUNN'S
HEATING & AIR COND.
INC.

218 South Main Street,
Louisburg NC
496-2253

Established in 1988




Hayes Auto Service

919-496-6931 

1550 US 401 Hwy. S., Louisburg

Established in 1989



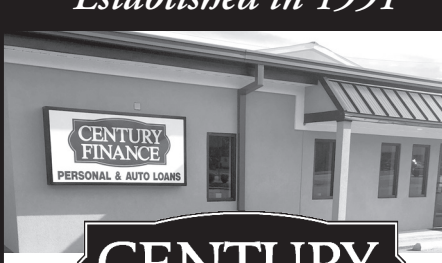
TAR RIVER VETERINARY HOSPITAL
Dr. Elyse Goldman, DVM

----- Please call for appointment -----

919-494-5500

101 E. Green St • Franklinton, NC

Established in 1991



CENTURY FINANCE

626 North Bickett Blvd • Louisburg
Phone/Fax: 919-496-1934
j.chesson@centuryfinancenc.com

Apply online at
www.centuryfinancenc.com

Established in 1991



Money ACE Hardware

402 S. Bickett Blvd.
Louisburg
919-496-7920

Opens Second Store 2008



1120 US Hwy 1, Youngsville Crossing
Youngsville • 919-554-1541

Established in 1996



A Five-Star Center
☆☆☆☆☆

ABC ADVENTURES
PRESCHOOL & CHILDCARE

118 Industrial Dr, Louisburg, NC
919-496-2886
abcadventures1996@gmail.com

Established in 1998



EL PERICO MEXICAN RESTAURANT

Thanks to our loyal customers!

El Perico Mexican Restaurant

AUTHENTIC MEXICAN CUISINE

335 Franklin Plaza, Louisburg • 919.496.7511
ElPericoMexicanRestaurant.com

Established in 1999

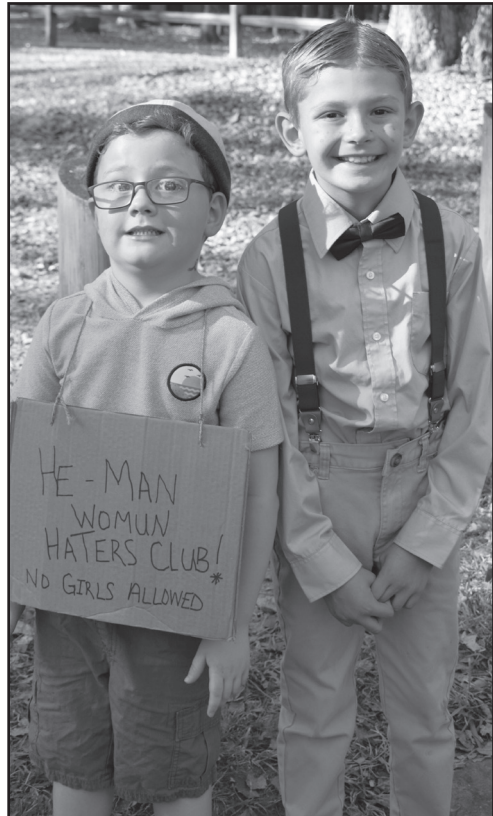


C.H.I. OVERSEEN DOORS

25 Years!

GARRETT'S GARAGE DOORS, INC.

919-853-3058 or 919-291-2409
Locally owned & operated
www.garrettsgaragedoors.com



OCTOBER

- After three meetings, a crash course in quasi-judicial protocol and a compromise between the applicant and an aggrieved neighbor, county commissioners awarded Verizon a special use permit to build a cell tower.
- A utility worker was killed after falling from a bucket truck. Raymond Morgan, 44, was cutting tree limbs near power lines on John Mitchell Road when the apparatus apparently shifted and he fell from a height of about 60 feet onto power lines, then the ground.
- Brigadier General Norman C. Gaddis celebrated his 100th birthday on Sept. 30 at Triangle North Executive Airport, surrounded by a hangar full of well wishers. He was honored for a distinguished military career and also was awarded the Order of the Long Leaf Pine.
- Three days after county management updated commissioners on EMS activities, and three years to the day after he started working for the county, Emergency Medical Services Director Jim Gusler resigned, effective immediately. It was not clear if the matters were related.
- Franklin County sheriff's deputies arrested a Youngsville man alleged to have embezzled money from the recreation organization he claims to have resurrected. Deputies

Halloween is always a fun time for kids and the Town of Louisburg had a great turnout during its fall festival in 2023. In the photo above, chalk artists Scout Todd (left) and Isla Heckman show off their sidewalk art. In the photo at the left, Jackson Leonard is Spanky while his brother Jace Leonard came as Alfalfa during the fall festival.

- arrested Jamie Earl Murray, charging him with two counts of felony embezzlement.
- The local agriculture community celebrated the ties between urban and rural dwellers with the annual Farm-City Luncheon.
- Katelyn and Brandon Welch of Hidden Acres Farm in Centerville were selected as a State Fair Farm Family. They have produced grass-fed beef, chicken and eggs, grass-fed lamb, forested pork and homemade soaps.
- Louisburg annexed the 40-acre Forest Hills Subdivision along NC 561 which could grow to include 64 single-family homes.
- The Louisburg council, on a split vote, agreed to hold future council meetings in the Karl Pernell Safety Center which is a larger venue than town hall.
- Warren County sheriff's deputies arrested an adult and three juveniles that Franklin County authorities allege were responsible for a string of armed robberies at area Dollar General Stores.
- Youngsville Elementary School Principal Frank Wiggins was named the county school system's principal of the year.
- The entire county was gearing up for a big weekend of ghosts, goblins and other frightful things!

NOVEMBER

- Franklin County received a \$90,700 grant to improve the runway apron at the county's airport.
- Election day was on the horizon and candidates were out searching for votes.
- Louisburg voters made sweeping changes to the town council, adding Kim Baker, Dalita Woods and Dr. Phil Stover to the panel.
- After listening to a hall full of residents, Bunn commissioners fell silent. Their inaction left the county scrambling to find a new tower location to fit into an improved emergency radio communication system.
- At long last, years overdue and way over budget Section C of U.S. 401 from the Wake County line to Royal was finally completed. That left the most important section of the highway, Section D from Royal to

Louisburg undone and pushed far into the future by state leaders.

- Operators of a China-based hemp food producer announced they expected their factory just south of Louisburg to be online early this year. During the announcement, Q-power chairwoman Zhiyi Zhang wore a red blouse, reflecting her culture and the bright future the company expects to have in Franklin County.
- Residents of a Louisburg community thanked the town's police and governing board for help in keeping the Ford Circle, Loy Drive and Waddell Street neighborhood a good place to raise families and to live. The extra attention from police and the town have alleviated or eliminated many of their problems, members of the community said.
- In one of the closest election races possible, Franklinton Mayor Art Wright retained his seat by a one-vote margin, 166 to 165, besting challenger John Allers.
- Two men whose ancestors helped create the town of Louisburg met on the Person Place grounds 244 years after their ancestors created the town. James 'Jay' Milner and Tommy Massey realized how connected their families of today are to what happened here so many years ago.
- A missing file "dinged" the town of Louisburg's audit report after documents in that file regarding the Depot Hill project mysteriously went missing. Auditors cited a "material weakness" because of the lost file but a search of town hall failed to turn up the documents or reveal why and how they went missing.
- Franklinton's Tree Lighting and other holiday events helped kick off the Christmas season in Franklin County.
- The first reports of "zombie deer" were confirmed in Franklin County after a female white-tailed doe tested positive for Chronic Wasting Disease.

DECEMBER

- The Department of Transportation, despite hearing pleas from local folks, said the proposed high speed rail project is still likely to "split" both Youngsville and Franklinton yet leave local residents no convenient access to the rail system.
- Veteran county commissioner Harry Foy was elected chairman of that board and relative newcomer to the board, Roxanne Cash, was named vice chair.
- Christmas cheer was spreading rapidly across the county — and Santa Claus was becoming a familiar sight, especially at parades.

The Town of Bunn knows how to put on a Christmas parade. At right, Georgia McGowan, 3, enjoyed her time on the Hardee's of Bunn float and Santa is always a favorite at the end of the parade.

•County officials were assuring the community that improvements at the animal shelter are ongoing.

•After finally getting the long-delayed state budget totals, county school officials were able to adopt their own budget for fiscal 2022-2023 but also warned that costs will likely rise significantly when the 2024 budget process begins.

•The county decided to begin seeking an attorney to work full-time on county projects. That person will not replace the board-appointed county attorney, officials said.

•County officials gave Lake Royal permission to change the company that distributes water into the lakeside development. Residents had been complaining that the previous company was not adequately maintaining its equipment, leading to reduced water quality.

•At almost the end of the year, the State Bureau of Investigation was investigating the shooting death of Samuel Joseph Tripp of Louisburg. He was shot by sheriff's deputies — and was holding what is reported to have been a paintball gun at the time of the incident.

•Communities around the county helped mark the graves of veterans as part of the Wreaths Across America celebration. The event, which began in 1992, involves laying wreaths in cemeteries to recognize and remember veterans.

•The controversial rail project that could eventually zip through Wake Forest, Youngsville and Franklinton without stopping got a \$1.09 billion boost from the Biden Administration. When completed years from now, the rail line is expected to trim 90 minutes off the rail commute from Raleigh to Richmond, VA.

•Youngsville and Franklinton officials have joined others in the region supporting a study of whether making sections of U.S. 1 toll road would be beneficial. Earlier in the year the state Department of Transportation removed two segments of U.S. 1 from proposed improvements as outlined in the State Transportation Improvement Program.



Established in 1999

THE KID'S CORNER
QUALITY CHILD CARE
919-497-5670 #35000049

5 STAR
★★★★★
Hours:
7am-6 pm
Mon-Fri
205 Dogwood Rd.
Louisburg

Established in 2000

Proudly Celebrating Our 24th Anniversary!
Thank you for allowing us to be your HVAC service provider!

ALFORD Mechanical
HEATING AND AIR CONDITIONING
Serving Franklin County & Surrounding Areas
919-340-0676
www.alfordmechanical.com

Established in 2003

Gena Walling McCray, PLLC
Mediator / Arbitrator
215 Court Street, Louisburg, NC 27549
(919) 497-0091
www.AttorneyMcCray.com

Established in 2004

Cook Shack
SOUTHERN • TRADITIONAL • TRUSTED
CATERING

919-497-0669
LOUISBURG, NC
COOKSHACKCATERING.COM

Established in 2005

ALLTECH Mechanical Services, LLC
Heating & Air • Refrigeration • Electrical
919-496-7250 • 919-215-4090
Louisburg, NC
Mike & Robbie Hunt, Owners

Established in 2008

ROCHELLE MOON REALTY
Office: 919-496-0444
www.RochelleMoon.com
Email: rochemoonrealty@gmail.com
5921 Hwy 561 • Louisburg, NC

Established in 2012

New Southern Loans
Personal and Auto Loans
216 N. Bickett Blvd • Suite 1 • Louisburg
(919) 340-0640
— Visit us and apply online at —
www.newsouthernloans.com

Established in 2013

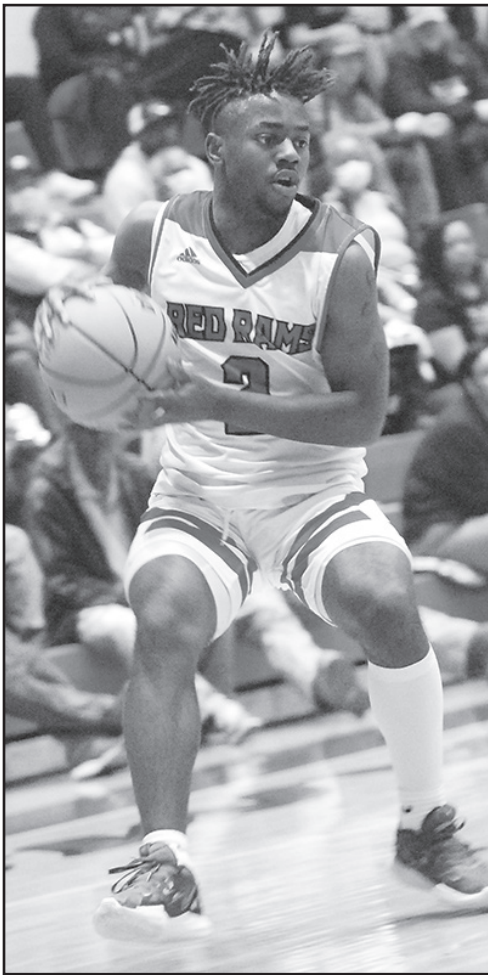
Johnny Bull's JB
Off Bickett Blvd. Behind Bojangles
919-496-3800
Thank you to our customers for your loyal support!



2023 LOUISBURG HIGH SCHOOL SOFTBALL SQUAD WITH ITS CHAMPIONSHIP TROPHY

‘Big Three’ Dominate Scene

LC softball, FHS hoops and BHS wrestling enjoyed solid years



FRANKLINTON'S
DA’KARI JONES

By GEOFF NEVILLE
Times Sportswriter



BUNN’S DYLLIN ELLIS TOOK SECOND IN THE STATE

FRANKLIN COUNTY -- Deep playoff runs -- three of them to be exact -- were the main focus of sports in Franklin County during 2023.

At Louisburg College, the Lady Hurricanes continued their softball excellence by once again winning the Region X Championship.

LC, coached by Eric Lee, then won the district crown thanks to Darrah Nickens’ walk-off home run to once again qualify for the National Junior College Athletic Association National Tournament.

The Lady Hurricanes reached the Final Four and closed with an amazing 62-4 worksheet.

LC superstar Bri Tucker was named the NJCAA Player of the Year, while freshman Zoey Jones was the Pitcher of

the Year.

In her final season at Louisburg, Tucker smashed 46 home runs to go with 107 RBI and a .521 batting average.

And with just about everyone returning except for Tucker, the Lady Hurricanes will open the 2024 campaign ranked Number One in the nation.

The hits -- literally -- didn’t stop with the Lady Hurricanes.

Back in February, the Bunn Wildcats reached the Class 2-A State Dual Wrestling Championships for the second consecutive season.

Facing a tough Newton-Conover club, the Wildcats were ahead midway through the event, but N-C was able to rally and pull away for the victory.

Still, the Wildcats enjoyed an excep-

tional year under Parker Haake -- winning the Big East conference crown and the Class 2-A East Regional title.

On the individual front, heavyweight Dyllin Ellis reached the Class 2-A State Championship match at the Greensboro Coliseum, but lost a one-point heartbreaker.

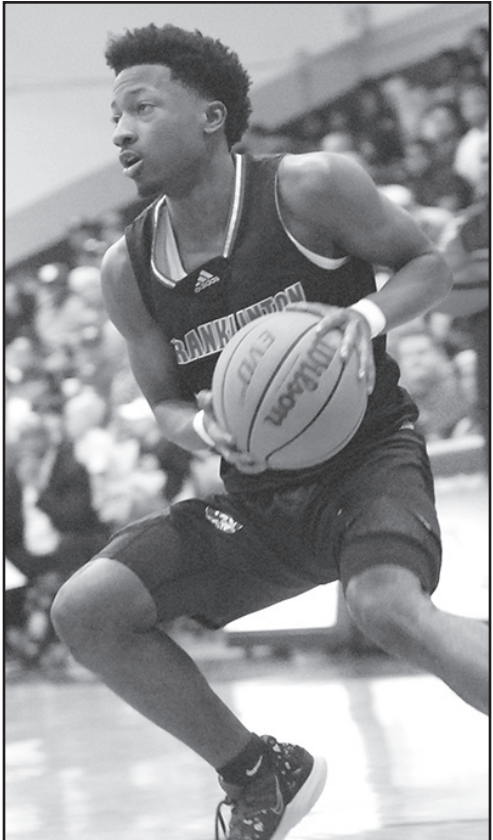
Ellis is only the second wrestler in BHS history to make the state finals. Ironically, the great John Clay was the other finalist in the early 2000s, and he lost by one point just like Ellis.

Speaking of the Big East Conference, the Franklinton High School boys basketball squad enjoyed quite a year, going 25-5 overall under veteran skipper Darrin Stinson.

The Red Rams won the Big East Con-

ference Tournament crown and eventually reached the Elite Eight of the Class 3-A State Playoffs, only to fall to Pittsboro Northwood, which was led by UNC-Chapel Hill signee Drake Kelly.

That capped off the best season in recent FHS history, with one of the highlights being a last-second victory over homestanding Southern Durham in the state playoffs.



FHS’ KAMDEN TAYLOR

Established in 2013



Tickle Law Office
PLLC

We're here for you.

919-496-1201
info@TICKLELAWOFFICE.com

105 S. Main Street
Louisburg, NC 27549

Established in 2017



*We Are Committed
to Your Health.*

315 South Bickett Blvd
Louisburg, NC
919-496-4976
impacthealthcarenc.com

Established in 2023



WE BUY SCRAP METAL
919.340.0565
cdethmers@louisburgrecycling.com
790 NC 561 | Louisburg, NC