

The Business Journal

of Tri-Cities Tennessee / Virginia

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2019 Healthcare Heroes

Plus
ETSU's new
\$23 million
Rural Health
Research Center
and
Bristol 2040

Dr. Koyamangalath Krishnan

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Tusculum College of Optometry achieves Stage II in accreditation process

Tusculum University has reached a milestone in the accreditation process for the Niswonger College of Optometry. The Accreditation Council on Optometric Education has designated the Niswonger College of Optometry as a “Stage-Two Applicant.” This stage is not a pre-accreditation or accreditation status, but rather a step towards potential accreditation.

The Niswonger College of Optometry is engaged in the process of developing the program to meet accreditation standards. Moving from Stage 1 to Stage 2 clears the way for a site visit this year from the ACOE.

“Reaching Stage 2 is significant in accomplishing our goal to address the prevalence of ocular disease in Central Appalachia,” said Dr. James Hurley, Tusculum’s president. “We thank the ACOE for recognizing the quality, breadth and depth of our program so we can continue moving forward with this much-needed college of optometry.”

When it receives preliminary approval of accreditation, Tusculum will have the 24th college of optometry in the nation and the fifth in the Southeast.

Achieving Stage 2 follows the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges’ recent classification of Tusculum as a Level V institution. Tusculum can now offer as many as three doctorates, the first of which will be in optometry.

Virginia scrambles to aid displaced Blackjewel workers

When Blackjewel LLC, a West Virginia-based coal mining company announced its bankruptcy July 1, around 450 Southwest Virginia Blackjewel employees’ paychecks were returned, leaving families with what one banker called a very unhappy Independence Day. Virginia Governor Ralph Northam’s office directed the Virginia Employment Commission to waive the standard week-long waiting period for unemployment benefits for affected employees, authorizing overtime pay for Virginia Career Works representatives helping to connect displaced workers with job training programs and new job opportunities. The Southwest Virginia Workforce Development Board and Virginia CareerWorks hosted three rapid response events, one each in Norton, St. Charles and Richlands July 16 and 17. As Blackjewel entered bankruptcy protection, Congressman Morgan Griffith noted “knowingly writing bad checks in Virginia is illegal,” telling constituents, “Blackjewel is currently going through bankruptcy, and that process must settle the company’s obligations. Bona fide wages for bona fide employees are a priority.” On July 25, Bristol, Tenn.-based Contura Energy, Inc. announced plans to purchase Blackjewel assets in West Virginia and the Powder River Basin in Wyoming. [BJ](#)



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Much to do before September 10, much more after



Now that the agenda for the September 10 Regional Economic Forum at ETSU has been confirmed, August appears it will be a busy month. Both Joe Grandy, the mayor of Washington County, Tenn., and Richard Venable, the mayor of Sullivan County, have indicated the Mayors' Blue-Ribbon Task Force on Regionalism will have at least a preliminary report on what areas their workgroups have found where intercounty collaboration makes sense. Talks

continue between the boards of NETWORKS Sullivan County and the Northeast Tennessee Regional Economic Partnership regarding collaboration in economic development. And the accountable care community continues to grow as not-for-profit organizations across Northeast Tennessee and Southwest Virginia come together in a unified effort to stop reinventing each others' wheels.

We may even have a report this month from the North Star branding initiative, a study funded by various local governments regarding the creation of a brand for the region's outside marketing. Johnson City's city manager has already said the North Star study placed Appalachian Highlands No.1 among survey responders in Charlotte, Nashville and Atlanta, with Tri-Cities second. Personally, I have misgivings about why the survey wasn't sent to site selection consultants in places like Boston, Chicago and Dallas. Those are the people to whom the branding effort is targeted. Also, they're far from Appalachia, so their prejudices against the Appalachian Highlands name may or may not have been more pronounced. We'll never know. But, we're picking at nits here. As I've written before, what we do with the brand is far more important than what words we choose to use. Actions speak louder.

As for the forum itself, here's what we know. We'll hear from ETSU's Jon Smith on the state of the state of the economy in the region. I've already had two people who have had reservations about regionalism in the past tell me, "He's just going to tell us how bad things are to scare us into supporting regionalism." Hmm. Well, we already know our economy has been flat while the rest of the nation has had economic growth for a decade, creating a net economic decline here. We already know the population is in decline. We already know young people are fleeing the region while older people are just getting older. I don't think you need to be scared to see the truth, but the truth is kind of scary.

We'll hear from Mark Fuller of ROSC Global, the consultant Eastman hired two years ago to study the region and its economy. I have no idea what he will say. He and I spoke, just after he came to the Tri-Cities, as he was making his first round of

interviews in the region. I know he spoke with several business community leaders and elected officials. When we met, he showed surprising candor and already some level of insight based on his previous discussions; I hope that continues with his appearance in September. The forum will also feature a panel discussion with business and not-for-profit leaders from Northeast Tennessee and Southwest Virginia.

The biggest thing I'd like to see happen September 10 is for folks to realize we already are a region, whether or not we choose to brand ourselves as one. Regardless of what we call ourselves, we are a single marketplace. In this space in 1988, the editors of *The Business Journal* pointed out the fact that dollars and cents do not regard county or state lines. The U.S. Census Bureau has released data showing driving habits between Washington County, Tenn., and Washington County, Va. More of us live in one city and work in another than ever before. More to the point, there are more of us living in one city and working in another than there are living and working in the same city.

Does that mean regionalism goes against all competition between cities and towns in the region? No. There will always be healthy competition for the new restaurant, the new retail center, the new housing development. That's good. The folks who believe regionalism is trying to kill all competition in the region don't seem to respect the difference between healthy competition and unproductive competition (in which individual cities and counties, while trying to bring in outside jobs and investment, undercut each other in ways that make the entire region appear to not have its act together, thus chasing the development entirely out of the region – everybody here loses).

The healthy competition inside the region won't determine whether any of our communities sinks or swims in the long run, though. What matters is the competition between our region and others in the state, in the Southeast, in America and in the world market. We have the potential – by addressing our weaknesses – to grow a product that will entice new jobs and investment to come here.

If we don't? Well, Jerry Caldwell, general manager of Bristol Motor Speedway summed it up well when someone told him they didn't think what happened to the economy of a community on one side of the region mattered very much to a community on the other side. "That's like standing on the bow of a sinking ship and saying, 'well, it's only the stern that's going under,'" Caldwell said.

My hope for the Sept. 10 forum is that it helps the last few anti-regional holdouts realize that all they're fighting with each other about is who gets the nicer deck chairs on a ship they've been helping to sink.

The Business Side of Healthcare:

Five Practical Considerations for Cybersecurity and HIPAA Compliance

by Ian P. Hennessey

If 2019 has taught us anything so far, it's that cybersecurity is a critical issue for all businesses, and especially for healthcare organizations. According to a recent survey reported in Becker's Hospital Review, 70 percent of healthcare organizations have experienced a data breach and one-third have reported a security incident within the last year. Earlier this year, Franklin, Tennessee-based Community Health Systems paid \$4.5 million to settle with its patients following at 2014 data breach caused by a malware attack.



While healthcare organizations are susceptible to cybersecurity threats like any other business, they are also subject to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) and its related regulations. In a nutshell, healthcare organizations are responsible for maintaining the privacy and security of the protected health information (PHI) of their patients, including PHI that is stored or transmitted electronically (ePHI). HIPAA can also apply to businesses that provide services to a healthcare organization when the services involve use or access to PHI. These businesses ("business associates") can be held directly liable under HIPAA under certain circumstances.

Data breaches involving PHI can lead to government investigations, regulatory fines, civil lawsuits, and bad publicity – things no business wants to face. Here are five practical considerations for healthcare organizations and business associates as they address cybersecurity and HIPAA compliance:

- Perform a HIPAA risk analysis. HIPAA requires healthcare providers to conduct an accurate and thorough assessment of the potential risks and vulnerabilities to its ePHI. Risk analyses should be done regularly to identify new potential threats and failure to do so could hit your organization's bottom line. Earlier this year, a Tennessee-based medical imaging services company paid \$3 million to settle with the government following a data breach due, in part, to their failure to conduct an accurate and thorough risk analysis.

- Implement appropriate safeguards. HIPAA requires organizations to implement security measures including administrative, physical and technical safeguards to address the potential threats to its ePHI. Your organization's safeguards, as well as the written policies and procedures by which they are established, must

be specifically tailored to your organization. While it is easy to find "form" HIPAA policies and procedures on the internet and elsewhere, these documents are not drafted with the specific circumstances of your organization in mind – where you lock your server, who can take a laptop home, how often personnel must change their computer passwords, and so on. Over the years, there have been a significant number of HIPAA settlements that stem from breaches where there was simply no policy in place to address a potential threat.

- Make sure business associate agreements are in place. Business associate agreements are not just paperwork – they are required under HIPAA. In 2016, a North Carolina orthopedic clinic paid the government \$750,000 to settle a HIPAA investigation due to failure to have a business associate agreement in place. Do not ignore the terms of a business associate agreement, either. If a breach occurs, provisions addressing indemnification, applicable notification periods, responsibility for covering the costs for handling a breach and caps on liability all become vitally important.

- Be ready to respond to a cybersecurity incident. If a cyber-related security incident occurs, your organization must be ready to execute its response. This means fixing any technical or other problems to stop the incident, taking steps to mitigate any impermissible disclosure of ePHI, and making appropriate reports to law enforcement and other agencies that handle cybersecurity matters. If the breach affected 500 or more individuals, then within 60 days your organization must report the breach to HHS Office of Civil Rights, notify the affected individuals, and notify the media.

- Consider cybersecurity and related insurance products. The risks posed by cyber-attacks, malware, and ransomware are a real risk to your organization and, if they occur, can become very expensive very quickly. In today's market, there are an increasing number of insurance options offering coverage for cybersecurity and related costs. For healthcare providers, some malpractice carriers not only offer cybersecurity policies but also insurance options covering healthcare regulatory investigations, fines, and other costs, including HIPAA.

Ian Hennessey is an attorney with London Amburn, a law firm dedicated to delivering client-driven legal services to its healthcare clients. For over 25 years, London Amburn has provided legal services encompassing health law, including regulatory and compliance, mergers and acquisitions, corporate and business, and employment matters, as well as medical malpractice and nursing home defense.

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are for general informational purposes only and are not to be construed as legal advice. You should consult an attorney regarding any specific legal questions.

Deep dive on latest housing data shows remarkable results

There were some eye-popping firsts in June's Housing Market Report from the Northeast Tennessee Association of Realtors (NETAR). At the same time, the data has some subtle and not-so-subtle things to say about local market conditions and trends.

The average price for a single-family resale was \$188,957. That average is an all-time high for the 11 counties monitored by NETAR. The average listing price was \$286,155, equating to a 16 percent increase from June last year. While the average listing price is a good description of how listings are performing, the median listing price offers better definitions of a couple of important trends.

June's median listing price was \$209,900, up 19.3 percent from June last year. Since half of the listings are above the median and half are below, it benchmarks not only a market where prices are increasing, it makes a stark statement about inventory and a subtle statement about affordability. To get a better grip on those statements, slightly more than seven out of every 10 homes sold in our market go for less than \$200,000.

So, if the June median listing price is almost \$210,000 and over 70 percent of sales are under \$200,000 that means more than half of the homes on the market are outside the market's Goldilocks price range.

To illustrate the inventory situation, let's look at some listing numbers from last month compared to June 2010. There were 530 listings in the Johnson City region for homes at \$200,000 or below last month. In June 2010 were 1,376 in that price range. There were 408 listings for properties at \$200,000 or below last month in the Kingsport region and 1,018 in June 2010.

The Tri-Cities region is fortunate to have a housing market where the average wage owner can still afford a median-priced home. That's not the case in 75 percent of the markets across the nation, according to Attom Data Solutions' Q2 Housing Affordability Report. However, it's not much comfort to have a better-than-average affordability rating if the number of affordable homes on the market

has dwindled to the point where accessibility is a bigger challenge than affordability.

The good news on the affordability front is June's local median sales price was \$162,000, according to Realtor Property Resource (RPR). Even though the inventory is squeaky tight, at least half of the homes sold last month were in the affordable range. June's median price was 12 percent higher than it was June last year, so the trending is pushing the affordability limit.

What were some of the other remarkable data points in the June Trends Report?

- Average listing prices were up across the region. Johnson City has the highest average at \$333,888 followed by Greeneville at \$283,811; then Kingsport and Bristol TN at \$260,235. The average in Bristol VA was \$242,546 and \$215,878 in Elizabethton.
- There were more single-family resales last month than any other June since 2008.
- June was second to May last year for the single highest number of single-family resales.
- Last month's average single-family resale price was 18.2 percent higher than it was in June 2008 – the year before the Great Recession hit the local housing market. That's an increase of \$29,075.
- The average single-family resale that closed in June was on the market for 105 days. This time is the least days on market for single-family home sales 2008, and the average for the region so the time on market is less when you drill down to county markets. For instance, according to RPR the median time on market in Sullivan County was 56 days; 59 days in Hawkins County; 66 days in Washington County; 58 days in Carter County; and 69 days in Greene County.

The long-term trend does show some slight slowing of the existing home sales growth rate, but the opposite is evident for prices. Since mortgage rates seem to be plateaued and consumer confidence is strong, those conditions will likely last for the rest of the year.

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ETSU to house Center for Rural Health Research

by Scott Robertson



Center Director Dr. Randy Wykoff addresses the crowd at the founding announcement. PHOTO COURTESY ETSU

Tennessee Governor Bill Lee announced July 16 the funding of a new Center for Rural Health Research to be housed at the East Tennessee State University College of Public Health and directed by Dr. Randy Wykoff, public health dean. The governor pledged the state budget would include \$1.5 million for the first year and \$750,000 for the center for the next nine years. That gift was more than matched by Ballad Health, when Chairman and CEO Alan Levine announced a \$15 million matching gift to the center over the next 10 years.

Lee said ETSU was the perfect place for the center because of the unique make-up of the region. “There are multiple cities, a significant number of rural communities – when you come together and you look at this region as a region, we see opportunity that I think is underutilized and untapped. What that means is there is a great deal of hope for prosperity in this region in ways we haven’t seen before. I have a strong belief in that and hope for it, and a strong commitment from my administration.”

That \$22+ million in total funding could amount to seed money for the center if grant applications are successful over the coming decade, Levine said. “(The funding we announced today) is funding for infrastructure. The real benefit from an economic perspective is Dr. Wykoff is going to be out there competing for external grants all over the world. That’s the benefit of this

center – in getting partnerships with other universities and other systems. When we go and start competing for competitive grants from the National Science Foundation the National Institute of Health, private grants, it could be tens or hundreds of millions of dollars brought into this region for the purpose of funding various studies and various initiatives. So, the things Ballad is doing will generate interest from outside parties. Until now we really didn’t have the infrastructure to attract that funding. We’ve now given Dr. Wykoff a vehicle to go out there and proactively compete for those dollars. So, the \$22 million is a lot of money, but it could pale in comparison to what we might bring in.

“Everyone benefits from a healthy, educated, drug-free workforce,” Wykoff said. “If you don’t have education and health, you can’t bring in new businesses and you can’t grow the businesses that you have. Prosperity, health and education are inseparable.

“Poverty is associated with factors like rates of smoking, more sedentary lifestyle, higher rates of substance abuse. All of those things not only impact health, but they have a cost consequence. That cost consequence is both in health care, but also in terms of employability. So, the more we can improve health in the region, the more we can improve educational outcomes in the region – the more we’ll see great growth in economics, jobs and opportunity in the region.”



ETSU President Dr. Brian Noland, Center Director Dr. Randy Wykoff and Ballad Health Chairman and CEO Alan Levine.
PHOTO BY BILL DERBY, PUBLISHER

Health, education and economic development are the necessary bases needed to grow prosperity in the region, Wykoff said. “You need all three. You can imagine that without education we’re not going to bring in higher-level employment opportunities. Without good health, we’re not. Without those higher-level employment opportunities, we’re not going to have the resources to invest in education and so on. I see our worlds – health, economic development and education – as inexorably intertwined.”

The potential positive effect of the Center on the region was one reason Ballad Health threw its support behind the effort, Levine said. “When you have low unemployment and low workforce participation, you can’t get companies to relocate here. The unemployment rate is as low as it has ever been. So, if Tennessee is going to grow, it’s got to increase its workforce participation. We have to get more people into the workforce, and that’s exactly what Dr. Wykoff is talking about.”

One recent estimate showed around 47,000 northeast Tennesseans who would otherwise be employable outside of workforce participation. Some have addiction problems or education deficits that could be addressed by the work at the Center for Rural Health Research, Levine said. That research will benefit not only this region, but all of Appalachia, and rural America, said ETSU President Dr. Brian Noland. “Appalachia is going to lead in developing solutions to many of the challenges facing our rural communities. This is not a Tennessee problem. It is a national one. I’m pleased that ETSU will lead this



Tennessee Governor Bill Lee announces the state will fund \$8.25 million for the Center over the next 10 years.
PHOTO COURTESY ETSU

academic, research-based effort to solve some of our nation’s most important problems.”

In the past, much research has been done into the crossover relationships of issues including poverty, improper nourishment, illegal drug use and prescription drug abuse. Wykoff said the Center will focus more on how to break the cycles by which these problems continue from generation to generation.

“My top priority is broadly looking at the issue of intergenerational cycles,” Wykoff said. “If you’re born into poverty, you tend to stay in poverty. Your kids’ educational level tends to reflect their parents’ educational level. Children are exposed to smoking and so on. So, our first question is ‘what do we already know about how to interrupt those intergenerational cycles?’

“We already know that smoking is more common in poverty,” Wykoff said. “I want to know what we can do about it.”

To that end, the Center will be hiring and partnering with individuals and other organizations with expertise in at least one of the intergenerational problem areas affecting rural health.

Wykoff said no specific outcome measures have yet been defined for the Center. “In the short term, I need to look at and hire people who know what can be done to interrupt these cycles. Once we get those folks on board, then we can say, ‘What are the issues we want to deal with first?’ I am fairly optimistic there will be some low-cost things that can be done that can fundamentally change things, but I won’t know specifics until we have completed the research work and the background work.” [B1](#)

Bristol 2040 enters implementation stage

by Scott Robertson

Editor's note: One year ago, The Business Journal of Tri-Cities TN/VA accepted an invitation from Beth Rhinehart, CEO of the Bristol Chamber of Commerce; Jim Maxwell, regional publisher of the Bristol Herald-Courier and Jerry Caldwell, general manager of Bristol Motor Speedway to sit on the steering committee of Bristol 2040, a visioning effort for Bristol, Tenn., and Va. As a regional publication, The Business Journal accepted the invitation because we believe the entire region's economy benefits from the economic strength and viability of each of its communities. This is part one of a two-part series.

The Bristol 2040 visioning process began two years ago with a conversation between the then-mayors of Bristol, Va., and Tenn. Bill Hartley of Virginia and Chad Keen of Tennessee, who were brainstorming about how their respective Bristols could work together for the betterment of all. They decided rather than just taking the responsibility for such talk upon themselves, they would seek a vehicle to garner input from citizens, businesses and community organizations on both sides of the state line.

Working through the Bristol Chamber of Commerce, a grant for \$81,000 from the USDA was secured, then matched with donations from Bristol businesses. Following a request for proposals, Market Street Services, a consulting firm, was hired to administer the visioning process.

A 24-member steering committee was assembled a year ago, and has been meeting regularly. In the meantime, Market Street has conducted one-on-one interviews, focus groups and an online survey to gather as much community input as possible.

"The Market Street report took the data that's available from valid and respected organizations that are trusted around the nation, but it also took into account all the conversations we've had around the table over the last year," Rhinehart said. "This was a very comprehensive look at Bristol to create the most valid approach to determine what makes sense."

The steering committee, working with Market Street, defined eight areas of strategic focus moving forward: Arts & Tourism, Competitive Workforce, Downtown Bristol, Entrepreneurship, Housing, Leadership and Collaboration, the Music Economy and Targeted

Business (traditional economic development). Workgroups are to be formed over the next several months, likely to include individuals who were interviewed, responded to surveys, or sat on focus groups for each area as the Bristol 2040 initiative moves from its early stages into implementation. The steering committee will also have a role in implementation, with members sitting on workgroups.

"If it's going to be Bristol's plan – and it is – it needs to be owned by the Bristol community," Rhinehart said. "You had to have a group that was manageable to get us to this point. Now is when you really roll up your sleeves and start moving toward the goals that have been set forth and the performance measures we hope to meet."

"It's going to take people with expertise in the different areas we're talking about, people who have the connections, or just people who have a true love and passion for being better tomorrow and the next day and the next day who are willing to commit to do the work to get us where we need to be. It'll evolve over the next 20 years to include as many people as are willing to participate and are needed to make things happen."

The Chamber will continue to serve as the facilitator for the process, Rhinehart said, including the hiring of an individual to act in day-to-day administration.

"The right way to do this is to hire an individual who is committed to this, eight hours a day. Everyone on the steering committee has a day job, though they are very committed to this process. We need one person dedicated to it to make sure we are meeting our milestones and performance measures. That's how you reach your goals. We can think about it and talk about it, but until the work actually starts, and whatever the programmatic side of this looks like really gets underway, again with the help of a tremendous number of people, that's where you really make the difference."

"So, hiring someone who can facilitate this every day, keep our steering community engaged on where we are meeting those performance measures, and getting the community excited about it. I know this has been a very methodical process to get here, but it's really exciting to think about doing these things and where we can end up in 20 years." ■





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Ballad announces executive team changes with emphasis on physician leadership, innovation

Three Ballad Health executives are taking on new titles and responsibilities in the C-suite.

Eric Deaton has been named Ballad Health's chief operating officer, with oversight of Ballad Health's systemwide operations, including the newly created Behavioral Services Division. Previously, Deaton was Wellmont Health System's executive vice president and chief operating officer.

Marvin Eichorn has been named Ballad Health's chief administrative officer, with oversight of corporate operations and services, and Ballad Health's value-based services administrative organization. Eichorn has held senior leadership roles within Mountain States Health Alliance and Ballad Health since 1998, including chief operating officer and chief financial officer.

Taylor Hamilton has been named Ballad Health's chief consumer officer, a new role being created to develop new and innovative interactions with patients and families, listening to the needs of consumers and physicians and using those insights to develop an improved patient experience.


In addition, Ballad is turning to its physicians to help guide its efforts to adjust to the changing healthcare landscape. Ballad

announced new titles for nine physicians who will be taking on additional administrative and leadership responsibilities. "We believe the only way we will sustain success is to create more opportunities for collaboration with physicians," said Alan Levine, Ballad Chairman executive chairman, president and CEO. "Our trusted clinical experts will help lead the way forward as we seek closer partnerships with the federal government, state Medicaid programs and our payer partners who all want closer value-based relationships."

Heading up Ballad Health's physician leadership structure will be Dr. Clay Runnels, who will serve as chief physician executive. In this role, he will have oversight of all clinical services, quality, service lines, Ballad Health Medical Associates, health research and graduate medical education.

Dr. Amit Vashist will serve as chief clinical officer, focusing on clinical quality, value-based initiatives to improve quality while reducing cost of care, performance improvement, oversight of the clinical delivery of care and will be the liaison to the Ballad Health Clinical Council.

Dr. Matthew Loos will serve as chief academic officer, overseeing academic programs and partnerships as well as graduate medical



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education programs. Loos has served as chief medical officer of Ballard Health's Washington County (Tenn.) market since 2016 and will also continue in that role on an interim basis while a search is conducted for his replacement.

Dr. Chris Metzger will serve as system chair of clinical research, overseeing the advancement of clinical research activities within Ballard Health hospitals and clinics, including clinical trials. Metzger is a practicing interventional cardiologist who serves as director of Holston Valley Medical Center's diagnostic catheterization and interventional labs.

Dr. Mark Patterson will serve as president of Ballard Health Medical Associates, overseeing operation of more than 800 physicians, advanced practice providers and urgent care services. Patterson has served as a general surgeon in Greeneville since 1995. In 2012, he joined Laughlin Medical Group, where he held both clinical and leadership roles, including chief medical officer.

Dr. Mark Wilkinson will serve as vice president of medical staff services and hospital based programs, overseeing all aspects of physician credentialing, medical staff governance, peer review and hospital-based programs and services.

Dr. Herb Ladley has been named chief

medical officer for Ballard Health's Northwest Division. Ladley has a long tenure as a physician leader at Holston Valley Medical Center. As a cardiologist, he has served in various leadership roles for cardiovascular services as a senior physician, and he was system vice president for cardiovascular services for Wellmont Health System for eight years.

Dr. Daniel Lewis has been named chief medical officer for both campuses of Greeneville Community Hospital. Lewis is a board-certified family medicine physician with an additional certificate of added qualification in sports medicine.

Dr. Shari Rajoo has been named chief medical officer for population health services. Rajoo is a primary care physician, most recently serving as assistant vice president and medical director of population health for Ballard Health Medical Associates.

Ballad Health also announced the creation of The Innovation Center. "There is so much innovation going on within the walls of our hospitals and clinics," Levine said. "When we see these opportunities to help bring ideas to market, or to partner with other organizations that have made investments in improving the human condition, Ballard Health wants to be able to facilitate and help capitalize on those."



Eric Deaton



Marvin Eichorn



Taylor Hamilton



Dr. Matthew Loos



Dr. Clay Runnels



Dr. Amit Vashist

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HealthcareHEROES

Health Care: (noun, two words) the field concerned with the maintenance and/or restoration of the health of the body or mind; any of the procedures or methods employed in this field.

Healthcare: (adjective, one word) of, relating to, or involved in health care.

Hero: (noun) a person noted for courageous acts or nobility of character; a person who, in the opinion of others, has special achievements, abilities, or personal qualities and is regarded as a role model or ideal.

Thank you to our partners





It has been more than a quarter century since *The Business Journal* began honoring Healthcare Heroes in our region. Much has changed in that time. Technology has advanced. Business models have undergone nothing short of a revolution. The healthcare needs of the region's population have changed drastically.

Yet the central tenet of the Healthcare Heroes program remains true. The individuals and organizations who fit the descriptions above toil every day, often with little or no recognition, doing deeds most outside the medical profession would consider remarkable, even amazing. They deserve our gratitude.

To say nothing of the fact that healthcare is now the largest employment sector in the region, the economic impact of the industry is huge and growing. Whether it be the changing nature of employee benefits, or the need to address issues from obesity to mental illness

to addiction, the simple fact is no business can exist without facing concerns regarding health care and its provision. Every business must have healthy employees and customers to survive.

For this region, *The Business Journal* recognizes those who are going above and beyond the call of duty in the healthcare field each year, as we did at a luncheon at the Carnegie Hotel in Johnson City July 19. While the field of honorees is only 25 members to a class, it is representative of the thousands of healthcare workers who serve the region from Marion, Va., to Greeneville, Tenn.

The Business Journal wishes to recognize the dedication and commitment of our title partner for the 2019 Healthcare Heroes, Ballad Health, as well as presenting partner Blue Cross Blue Shield of Tennessee, and partners BCTI, Eben Concepts, Frontier Health and London Amburn.



"The physical therapist who helped my grandmother inspired me to become one."
Brian | Physical Therapy
Holston Valley Medical Center
14 years



"My desire to help others is why I decided to go into healthcare."

Jack | Human Resources
Greeneville Community
Hospital West
14 years

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"I always wanted to be a healthcare worker and help people."

Steve | Nurse
Russell County Hospital
10 years



"I love listening to and caring for people."

Dolly | Phlebotomy
Indian Path Community Hospital
13 years



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The 2019 Healthcare Heroes Luncheon



Ashlea Ramey and Meaghan Smith, with Ballad Health Marketing Department PHOTOS BY EARL NEIKRIK



Dr. Mashael Al-Namaeh, Dr. Andrew Buzzelli and Dr. Donnie Akers



Tabetha Cross, HMG, Robin Williams, *Business Journal* and Danielle Cannon, HMG



Dr. Koyamangalath Krishnan, with family, Vinodini and Meenu.



Shawn Frazier, left, BCBST and Lee Ellis, Eben Concepts



Jeff Derby, *Business Journal* Co-Publisher, with Walt Stone



Dr. Gregory Moore with Dr. Donny Reeves



Tom Tull, Ballad Health, Keynote Speaker



Kenton Hall, ETSU Quillen College of Medicine



Suzanne Eller, right, Holston Valley Medical Center, with daughter Hannah Hensley



Bill Derby, Publisher, Business Journal, and Scott Robertson, Managing Editor



Dr. Scott Fowler, HMG



James Tyler, CEO, Smyth County Community Hospital



Amy Burton, Frontier Health



Cup Of Kindness Awards

Community Service Award

Dr. Andrew Buzzelli

Dr. Andrew Buzzelli is leading the effort to bring a college of optometry and physician assistant program to Tusculum University. When the Niswonger College of Optometry opens, projected to be in fall 2020, it will be just the 24th such program in the nation and only the fifth in the South. Dr. Buzzelli, himself an optometrist, serves as executive vice president of the College of Health Sciences and founding dean of the college. Since his arrival in Greenville he has been engaged in securing required approvals from the accrediting bodies for the College of Optometry and physician assistant program. Under Dr. Buzzelli's guidance, Tusculum will add 70 new optometry students and 27 new physician assistant students to those respective programs each year, creating a new level of availability for service in an area of the country with a high rate of blindness and vision impairment.

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Cup Of Kindness Awards

Distinguished Service Award

Paula Bridges

For more than four decades, Ms. Bridges has served citizens with intellectual and developmental disabilities at the Dawn of Hope in Johnson City. She's been with the agency so long that the job she was first hired to do doesn't exist anymore. In October 1978 she had her first day as a developmental technician. That position has been replaced by direct support professionals, but that's of little matter because by 1980 she had been promoted to program coordinator. In 1995 she became director of Developmental Services, the title she holds today. Perhaps the greatest compliment her nominators gave came from the man who said, "I don't think Paula views it as work, but sees her time with Dawn of Hope as a blessing."



Cup Of Kindness Awards

Innovation Award

Landon Hamaker, Guy McAmis and Jacob Nance

David Crockett High School teacher Guy McAmis and students Landon Hamaker and Jacob Nance share this award for bringing the innovative spirit to a level one might not expect. At a time when nanotechnology is producing breakthroughs and the major research centers are blowing the genome wide open, Hamaker, McAmis and Nance decided to tackle one little girl's problem with today's technology at the rural level. Eight-year-old Lacie Broyles was born without a radial bone in her left arm, and without a left thumb. The passion of her young life is dance, gymnastics and tumbling. When Lacie's mother was told by the insurance company that a prosthetic that would allow Lacie to do tumbling moves was not covered, her mother turned instead to McAmis. Then-high school juniors Hamaker and Nance used software and a 3D printer available at the rural Washington County school to, through trial and error, create a prosthetic device that works so well Lacie says now she forgets its there as she tumbles. Lacie was unable to attend because she was at nubsthetic camp.



Cup Of Kindness Awards

Meritorious Service Award

Rich Panek

Rich Panek's first day with State of Franklin Healthcare Associates was in 1997. So, to say he's had to navigate through some changes is an understatement. With an eye toward staying nimble and adaptable, Panek has administered a physician-owned entity by promising providers they'll be able to provide care as they see fit, as the market changes around them. With 140 providers caring for 120,000 patients, adaptability is important. That pediatrics is dwindling as senior care booms is today's issue, but Panek says through concepts like acute care at home, State of Franklin is already mapping out strategies for tomorrow's.

Cup Of Kindness Awards

Support Service Award

Karen Fox

This award goes to an individual for outstanding assistance in the field of health care. Over the years this award has been presented to everyone from financial benefactors to staffers to volunteers. In 2019, it goes to Holston Valley Medical Center's manager of volunteer services, Karen Fox. Ms. Fox's duties oversee everything from the hospital's gift shop and switchboard to its pet therapy program, which is one of the largest in the state with 78 participating support animals. Ms. Fox's attention to detail – and attention to people – has kept the nearly 300-person volunteer base engaged and active at Holston Valley. Getting that many people to show up and give a job their all is a challenge, especially when they're not being paid, but Ms. Fox's volunteers love what they do and love the work environment Karen has created.

Donna Abel

Donna Abel works in the infusion room in the cancer center at Johnston Memorial Hospital in Abingdon. The Healthcare Heroes program uses the phrase “going above and beyond” in describing what Healthcare Heroes do. Ms. Abel went all the way to New York. When a cancer patient – who was quickly losing the ability to walk and talk – told Donna that she was looking forward to being able to visit her first grandchild in New York, Ms. Abel was thrilled for her. When the grandmother’s ride fell through, Ms. Abel took vacation days to drive the patient to New York herself. Knowing what seeing that beautiful new life would mean to the patient was worth more than any vacation time or any wear and tear on a vehicle ever would be. For going 600 miles beyond the call of duty, Healthcare Heroes honors Donna Abel.



Teena Ahuja

Ms. Ahuja, regional vice president of Operations for Strategic Behavioral Health, Inc., played a key role in opening the Creekside Behavioral Health Center in Kingsport. Though she hails from Chicago, she made it a point to become a member of the Kingsport community in order to best understand the needs of the city, county and region. At one point in the process, the Strategic Behavioral Health facility in Green Bay, Wisconsin urgently needed operations management assistance. Ms. Ahuja proceeded to do both jobs, earning praise from the care providers in Wisconsin, while continuing to work to integrate Creekside into Kingsport, even going so far as to become a member of the Leadership Kingsport Class of 2019.

Dr. Mark Aziz

A 90-year-old was transformed from having trouble breathing in her home to being able to attend her granddaughter's college graduation...A 17-year-old boy who suffered a traumatic injury to his aorta in his chest was able to receive a minimally invasive procedure and get back to his active, youthful life...Those patients couldn't be more different, but they have the same person to thank – Dr. Mark Aziz, medical director of Holston Valley Medical Center's structural heart disease program. The team was the first in the region to perform transcatheter aortic valve replacement (TAVR) and MitraClip for mitral valve repair. He's also made it possible for the hospital to sustain its leading-edge care by promoting cost-containment measures and continuing medical education.



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Dr. Erick Bulawa

Dr. Erick Bulawa practices at Greeneville Community Hospital West and Ballad Health Medical Associates Internal Medicine. He has spent countless hours expanding his knowledge of metabolic health, learning how diet and lifestyle can cause, but also significantly improve, chronic health problems. He has earned board certification in obesity medicine and lipidology. This is in addition to two board certifications he already holds in internal medicine and pediatrics, making him one of the few physicians in the region with four board certifications. In 2015, he established the Metabolic, Weight Management & Lifestyle Center in Greeneville, and last year his teaching became part of the Greene County Partnership Youth Leadership program.



Amy Burton

Amy Burton works at the crisis triage center at Frontier Health, which means she knows that every time she picks up the phone, she is likely to be talking with someone dealing with seemingly impossible issues in life. Like the man who called and told her he needed her to tell his family he could not go on. She listened long enough to know he was serious about attempting suicide, then began working to get any information that might help her send emergency services to the right place. Once she convinced him she could not tell his family anything if she did not know who he was, he gave her his first name and the name of his uncle. Ms. Burton was able to pass that information to a coworker who pieced the identity together while Ms. Burton kept the caller on the line. The man was in fact attempting to end his life, but EMS arrived in time. For having the strength, savvy and dedication to handle those kinds of calls every day, Healthcare Heroes honors Amy Burton.

Wesley Combs

Wesley Combs is chief information officer of Holston Medical Group and president of the OnePartner Health Information Exchange. He was instrumental in driving the vision for the community HIE as well as its development. He also worked hard to engage and recruit physicians across the region in using this tool to improve care for Tri-Cities residents. Today, health systems in our region send about 100,000 patient records per month through the community HIE, while 10,000 providers across eight states share data through this tool. Combs' work with the HIE is also a differentiator in improving health outcomes at lower cost. Sharing information through the HIE helps improve performance under value-based payment models.



Honoring Our Healthcare Heroes and All 2019 Recipients



Amy Burton



Brandy Maltsburger



Allison Nunley



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"Wesley was instrumental in driving the vision for the community Health Information Exchange as well as its development. His efforts have made a deep impact on the quality and cost of care provided in the Tri-Cities region."

Scott Fowler, JD, MD
President & CEO, HMG



Wesley Combs,
Chief Information Officer

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Dr. Julie Culligan and Kim Odom

Julie Culligan, PhD and Kim Odom, RN, provide care and treatment to Veteran's Administration patients through the Whole Health Initiative. Dr. Culligan and Ms. Odom developed and implemented a program called Project Resilience at the beginning of Fiscal Year 2018. Project Resilience focuses on saving veterans' lives by providing safer, nonopioid alternatives for the treatment of chronic pain. It's working. In fiscal 2017, more than 12 percent of veterans at the Quillen VA Medical Center were prescribed opioids. In the first quarter of FY '19, that figure was 6.8 percent. Just so, in FY 2017, the percentage of veterans prescribed opioids and benzodiazapines was 8.75 percent. In Q1 2019, that number dipped to 4.4 percent. Perhaps more telling than the numbers are the comments from veterans including the one who recently said, "I used to think about ending it all. I don't think that way anymore."



Carol Edmiston

Ms. Edmiston, a volunteer at Smyth County Community Hospital and Francis Marion Manor Health & Rehabilitation, is a true giver in every sense of the word. Eight years ago, she read about a local man with polycystic kidney disease who was in need of a new kidney. He was a total stranger, but she donated a kidney and saved his life. While Ms. Edmiston never paused and has never thought twice about this donation, the gentleman who received her kidney thinks about her every day. Ms. Edmiston's volunteer work with Ballad Health doesn't require her to give up an organ, of course, but she definitely gives it her all every day. In the past five years, she has volunteered 2,230 hours. She has also continued her lifelong passion for speech therapy at Francis Marion Manor by using her expertise to improve nutrition for patients with feeding difficulties.

Suzanne Eller

With 35 years of pediatric nursing experience, Suzanne Eller has touched the lives of two generations. As the associate clinical leader of Holston Valley Medical Center's women's and children's services, Ms. Eller is responsible for the youngest lives that come through the hospital. Beyond her clinical units, though, she impacts children's well-being throughout our communities. She invests her time in the people who will be caring for our children as the instructor for the East Tennessee State University/Holston Valley Medical Center pediatric cohort program, and she volunteers her time to the Children's Advocacy Center of Sullivan County, where she raises awareness about child abuse and other issues impacting so many youth in our region, and how people can make a positive difference.



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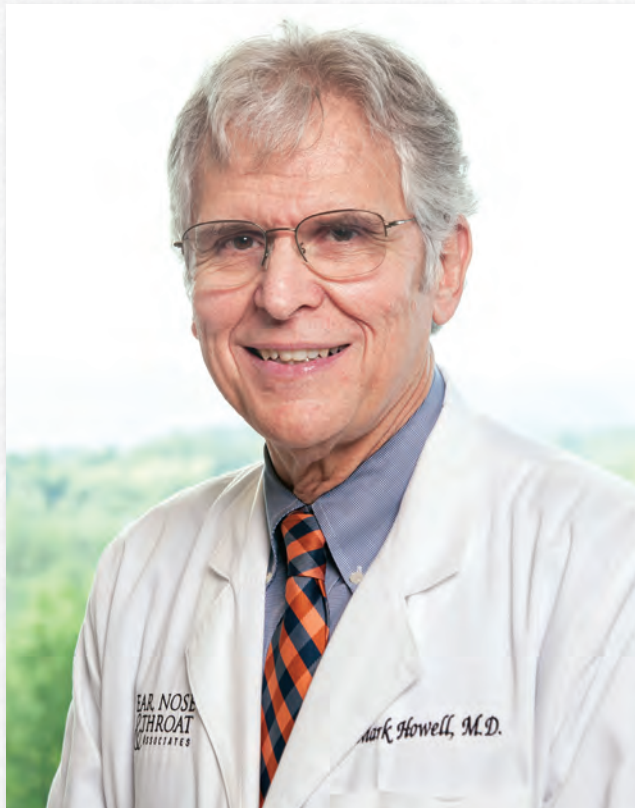


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Lori Hagen

Lori Hagen serves as the chief of Quality Management and Improvement Service for the James H. Quillen VA Medical Center. She led the facility to improve its metrics in a system for summarizing hospital system performance within Veterans Health Administration. Those metrics assess 25 Quality measures in areas such as death rate, complications, and patient satisfaction, as well as overall efficiency and physician capacity. Ms. Hagen's effort resulted in the facility obtaining a 5 Star Rating at the end of Fiscal Year 2018. Now, the James H. Quillen VA Medical Center has been selected as one of 18 VA Medical Centers to lead the VHA on a journey of becoming a High Reliability Organization (HRO). Ms. Hagen is the HRO Champion for James H. Quillen VA Medical Center.

Right: Dean Borsos, Mountain Home VA Healthcare System Medical Center Director accepts the honor for Lori Hagen.



Dr. Mark Howell

Some co-workers describe Dr. Howell as the complete doctor – combining the best of clinical expertise with the best of bedside manner. His skill and kindness have had a huge impact on our region for 35 years. A glance at his CV alone is impressive enough:

- Fellow of the American College of Surgeons
- Clinical Professor with the Department of Surgery at the Quillen College of Medicine
- Chief of Surgery at Johnson City Medical Center
- Chief of Staff, Department of Surgery at Franklin Woods Community Hospital

But Dr. Howell is known for his kind, compassionate nature just as much as he is for his surgical skill. Dr. Howell treats everyone with respect and kindness, no matter what their role. Co-workers say they look forward to doing surgeries with him. He is also known as a good teacher who will help medical students, residents and new physicians and staff members, and he serves as a great role model to younger physicians. One co-worker described him as “simply one of the most compassionate human beings I have ever met.”

Doug Janz

Doug Janz, a reformed journalist, is the voice of Ballad to Ballad's 15,000 employees. Single-handedly producing Ballad Health News, the corporate newsletter, his positive nature comes across in everything he communicates, whether on the page, the monitor or in person. It seems everything Janz does is fundamentally intended to benefit someone else. He is a primary caregiver for several family members, using most of his off-hours to provide home maintenance, financial assistance and transportation for those who rely on him. He regularly mows lawns for several close friends and family members. Then, when most people would be done for the day, Janz is back in the office, making sure his team members – and everyone at Ballad Health – have information they need for the next day. Janz's job is to communicate Ballad's values and actions. More importantly, he embodies the principles of patient-centered care and exemplifies the heart of a servant.



Thank You!



Preston McKee, keeping local, family-ownership a priority

Preston McKee, 3rd generation Funeral Director/Owner at Morris-Baker, and Kibbi, our grief therapy dog, were honored with a Healthcare Hero award. We're humbled to be among such a passionate, giving group.



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Melissa Johnston

Melissa Johnston works in Ballad Health's population health department, and sometimes it seems outside the office, she's providing individualized care for the region's entire population as well. Yes, she's the first to volunteer for the Children's Hospital day-long radiothon, but that's barely the tip of the iceberg. For her, helping others is a daily affair, whether it's a kid who doesn't fit in at school, a mentally challenged homeless man or a former patient who still calls her – after all these years – to change the battery in her phone. Six to eight times a year, Ms. Johnston and her family buy, prepare and serve the entire meal for 140 people at a local shelter. She specifically chooses to volunteer for holiday meals, because she knows these are the more expensive meals, and she wants to make sure a traditional and hearty meal is served. Those are but a few examples of the servant's heart exhibited by Melissa Johnston.



Dr. Koyamangalath Krishnan

Healthcare Heroes are nominated by patients, colleagues, sometimes even by students. Dr. Koyamangalath Krishnan was nominated by all of those. In fact, while it's not a competition, no nomination in the history of this program has received the quantity of nomination and support letters as Dr. Krishnan's. A university president emeritus who is also a patient wrote about Dr. Krishnan's international reputation as a leader in the field of oncology. A nurse tells that when a patient who could not eat solid foods needed a blender to get proper nutrition, Dr. Krishnan had the nurse go buy the blender on Dr. Krishnan's dime. A patient summed up their relationship by saying, "when I meet with him, he never looks at this watch." Another said even at the worst times, appointments with Dr. Krishnan were like visits with a dear friend. Krishnan is hailed by those who know best as a man who knows how to treat the disease while treating the patient with kindness and respect.

Brandy Maltsburger

It may or may not take a village to raise a child, but it takes a village to heal a village. Brandy Maltsburger has been creating the kind of collaborations that improve mental healthcare throughout our region for years. Before and since moving to Frontier Health two-and-a-half years ago, Ms. Maltsburger collaborated with a long list of providers and supporters including the ETSU OB-GYN Buprenorphine Clinic, Tennessee Department of Corrections Rehab Services, the Sullivan County Department of Education, Kingsport City Schools, United Way of Greater Kingsport, Johnson City Police Department, Ballad Health, the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth and the Johnson City Housing Authority. Ms. Maltsburger has also coordinated grant submissions resulting in hundreds of thousands of dollars in funding for children, youth, families and communities.



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Rebecca Sapp, a 2019 Healthcare Hero &
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Preston McKee

Donors and benefactors have long been a staple of Healthcare Heroes. Many have allowed hospitals and healthcare organizations to put their names on various centers, wings and buildings. Preston McKee, owner of Morris-Baker Funeral Home has, over many years, made significant donations to healthcare entities and efforts, but his approach has been what one might call soft-spoken. While he has at times funded 100 percent of efforts he's supported, this award is one of the few public acknowledgments he's allowed. McKee also takes a hands-on, or in this case, paws-on approach to aiding the efforts of healthcare providers by owning and allowing the use of a therapy and grief dog, for which he is a certified handler.



Monty McLaurin

You can often find Monty McLaurin, who until a few weeks ago was president of Ballad Health's Northwest Market, listening to patients, visitors, team members and medical staff in the halls of any one of the hospitals he oversaw. During 15 years in Kingsport, including work as CEO of Indian Path Community Hospital, he made patient safety a priority by performing weekly environmental rounds in every department. He also played a vital role in the development of many new programs at IPCH that dramatically enhanced the level of patient satisfaction. McLaurin will retire on December 31. In the interim, he will assist with the reopening of the Lee County hospital and the leadership transition of the Northwest Market. For a full and inspiring career, Healthcare Heroes honors Monty McLaurin.

Allison Nunley

In 2011, Ms. Nunley lost her home to a tornado in Greene County. She worked hard, volunteered helping other families in her situation, and, with the help of others, pulled her life back together and moved on, eventually taking a job at Frontier Health's Church Street Pavillion. Having been through that experience, she is both sympathetic and empathetic to the 75 to 100 people in her case load at any given time. She currently works with the Supported Employment Demonstration Program, helping individuals obtain or gain employment to help them in their recovery efforts. Her colleagues say she is the ideal person to help clients understand and appreciate the value of a job, because she is the ideal co-worker and teammate.



Dr. Rebecca Sapp

Dr. Sapp is director of Milligan's Master of Science in Counseling program. She also directs the Campus Counseling Center. On her watch, Milligan's counseling program has reached the cusp of becoming fully-accredited by the Council of Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs. In addition, Dr. Sapp was instrumental in the launch of Milligan's Social Work program. As a counselor, she has served the Johnson City school system since 2008 as a therapist-supervisor for Frontier Health, overseeing a range of community mental health services. She also sees clients as a private therapist.

Walt Stone

Walt Stone's nomination was, by Healthcare Heroes' usual standards, about 40 years too late. But since there was no Healthcare Heroes program 40 years ago, and since this nomination easily would have qualified, we'd like to tell you about "Greene Babies, First to Fly." Emergency air transport by helicopter in Northeast Tennessee began in the early 1970s, but when funding temporarily dried up in 1977, it went on hiatus. That fact was unacceptable to an airman named Walt Stone. During the period from 1977 to 1984 when the University of Tennessee established Lifestar, Stone himself bore the cost and "liability of transport" to fly children from Northeast Tennessee to the University of Tennessee and Vanderbilt Medical Centers.



*Congratulations
Dr. Krishnan and all
Health Care Heroes!*

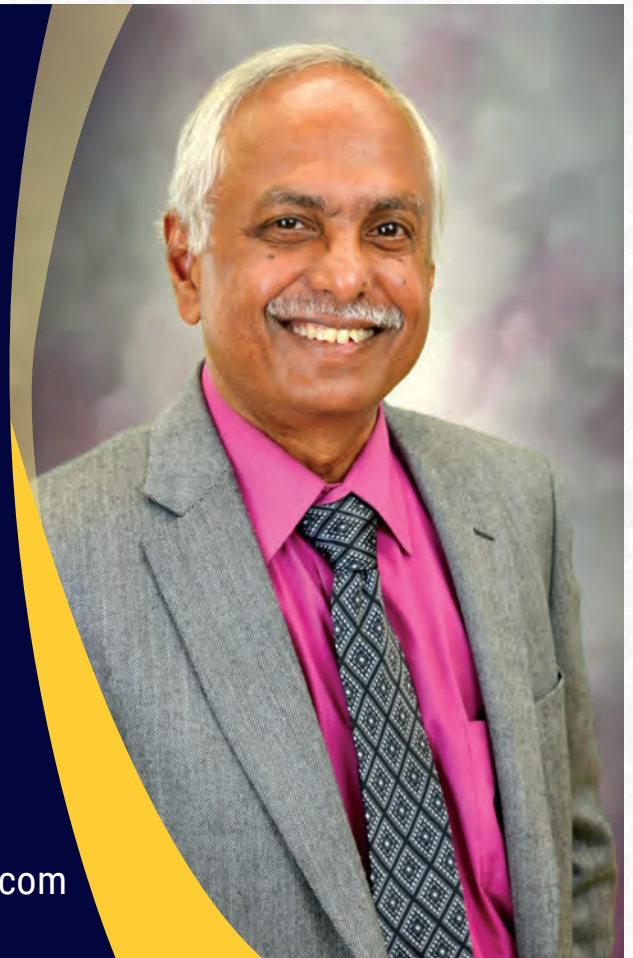
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Solar efforts in Southwest Virginia lauded by industry

The effort to keep Southwest Virginia's brand as an "energy region" intact despite the decline of the coal economy continues to pick up steam. Eight communities have achieved designation under the national SolSmart program for encouraging the growth of local solar energy markets, at a time when several major solar installations on schools, businesses, and community centers are poised to begin across the region. Those communities were each awarded a SolSmart designation for taking local action to reduce the time and expense required to install solar energy systems.

Among these communities, Wise County achieved SolSmart Silver designation, while the following others achieved SolSmart Bronze designation: Dickenson County, Lee County, City of Norton, Russell County, Scott County, Town of St. Paul, and Tazewell County. These are the first communities in the Central Appalachian region of Western Virginia, East Tennessee, West Virginia, and Kentucky to have applied for and received the SolSmart designation. "Southwest Virginia prides itself on the production of energy, and this is just a different way of continuing the energy production," said Lou Wallace, member of the Russell County Board of Supervisors. "Many manufacturing companies are looking for communities and counties who are forward thinking, and having this designation just solidifies our commitment to our future."


To date, seven large-scale solar projects totaling more than 4 megawatts are expected to begin construction by the end of the year – including at Ridgeview High School in Clintwood, Central High School in Wise County, and the Lonesome Pine Technology Park in Wise County, among other locations. The SolSmart designation will help facilitate additional solar projects in these communities at the residential, commercial, and utility-scale levels.

SolSmart is led by The Solar Foundation and the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) and funded by the U.S. Department of Energy Solar Energy Technologies Office. SolSmart uses objective criteria to recognize communities that reduce barriers to solar energy development

and provides no-cost technical assistance to help communities achieve designation.

"The development of solar projects is key to my 'all of the above' approach to energy, and has the potential to generate new jobs and foster economic growth in an environmentally-friendly way," said Virginia Senator Mark Warner. "I congratulate these eight counties and towns from Southwest Virginia

for striving to bring down the barriers that often put solar energy out of reach."

Nationwide, local requirements for permitting, inspection, and zoning can significantly increase the cost of a solar installation. By cutting red tape and streamlining the process for developing solar installations, communities make it faster, easier, and more affordable for residents and businesses to go solar. 



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Virginia-based software business opens doors to career planning in Southwest Virginia

by Laken Dillow

According to the Virginia Department of Education, fewer than half of high school graduates in Southwest Virginia either go on to technical training, higher education, or join the military. According to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, Center for Education and Workforce, youth who are uninformed of potential local career pathways are more vulnerable to dropping out of school, unemployment, or even underemployment, with a large sum of education debt and no direction.

As part of its Ignite program, the United Way of Southwest Virginia has begun working with public schools in the region using a software package designed to help students find their way forward into the world of work. MajorClarity creates learning environments for students in all stages of their education, says CEO Joe Belsterling. He created the software, which aids middle and high school students in career exploration because of his own experiences; more specifically, the lack thereof.

“It’s a two-part journey,” says Belsterling. “The first inkling of MajorClarity started because I realized that every time I needed to make a major life investment, I received an opportunity to try it out first, with the exception of picking a career path.” He refers to test-driving a car before making the major purchase or attending open houses when looking to purchase or rent a space to live. “My desire was to give students the opportunity to ‘test drive’ a career, so to speak,” Belsterling says. “I saw the potential to impact the educational system in the country. I wanted to help the rising workforce determine their career readiness or technical training paths through an opportunity that I wasn’t given.”

MajorClarity partners with K-12 schools to improve students’ college and career opportunities through video and activity-based content. The interactive software matches students to courses their school offers, as well as post-secondary pursuits based on the best career path for them. Richmond, Va., serves as the hub



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United Way of
Southwest Virginia

for the successful start-up company, however many other states have adopted it for its successful career coaching approach.

Educators receive access to an organized dashboard of all student profiles for easy management and can track student's progress through real-time analytics. Students generate a portfolio through personality, interest and learning style assessments that allow them to hone in on specific pathway-aligned course planning. Videos featuring industry professionals, as well as career simulation activities have proven to engage students up to twice as much as other career coaching and exploration efforts. In fact, MajorClarity has a near 80 percent completion rate, leading to a more vibrant career planning approach.


Carroll County High School (CCHS) brought MajorClarity into their school system with the help of United Way of Southwest Virginia's Ignite Program.

Larissa Brady, the 11th grade Guidance Counselor at Carroll County High School, has been dedicated to assisting students in educational and career exploration since November of 2012. According to Brady, CCHS has always done a great job at meeting the needs of their students. Approximately two years ago, they began to look for a resource that centralized and unified all students from middle to high school that was user friendly. The collaboration among the CCHS school system, United Way of Southwest Virginia and MajorClarity began in 2017.

CCHS, which has an approximate enrollment of 1,150 students now holds an annual three-day event called Intersession.

Intersession allows students to sign up for courses available that are specific to secondary education and employment opportunities that wouldn't typically be offered in any regular standardized curriculum.

"After students complete their profile and find their specific interests through MajorClarity, they are able to apply that information during Intersession," Brady says. "We take students on field trips to colleges and to local employers, which engages them greatly. One 11th grade student discovered through MajorClarity that she was interested in education, which we used to set up sessions in the classroom with elementary students."

Carroll County High School is also a broader participant in United Way of Southwest Virginia's Ignite program, which assists in partnering schools with local businesses to provide internships to students in the region. As United Way of Southwest Virginia's Ignite program coordinator at Carroll County High School, Brady plays a key role connecting student interns to local businesses. Travis Staton, President and CEO of United Way of Southwest Virginia stated, "Every day our youth face important decisions that are likely to impact their future. These decisions include deciding on potential career opportunities that can lead to their overall economic self-sufficiency." Because of this, United Way of Southwest Virginia is providing MajorClarity to every school in Southwest Virginia, impacting nearly 30,000 students. This investment in our youth is helping to prepare the workforce of tomorrow for jobs here at home." 

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David J. Stetson has been named chief executive officer of Contura Energy, Inc. Stetson most recently served as chairman of the board of directors and chief executive officer of both ANR, Inc. and Alpha Natural Resources Holdings, Inc. (together, Alpha) from July 2016 until Alpha's merger with Contura in November 2018. Stetson has served as a member of the Contura board of directors since Alpha's merger with Contura.



David Stetson

"Since we began this search process, our board has focused on identifying a candidate with the right mix of coal market acumen, robust executive experience, strategic ability, and natural leadership talent to create value for Contura's shareholders," said Neale Trangucci, board chairman. "David exemplifies these qualities and, combined with his existing familiarity with many of Contura's operational assets, will no doubt hit the ground running in leading Contura forward."

"I welcome the opportunity to lead Contura into the future, and I look forward to working alongside its talented management team for the benefit of our many diverse stakeholders," Stetson said.

Eastman Chemical Company today announced that **David A. Golden**, senior vice president, chief legal & sustainability officer and corporate secretary, has elected to retire after 25 years

of service to pursue other opportunities.

Clark L. Jordan, currently Eastman's vice president, Global Trade & Compliance and assistant general counsel, was named interim chief legal officer and corporate secretary effective Aug. 1, 2019.

"It has been my privilege to work with such talented and committed individuals over these past 25 years. I am excited about this new chapter but am deeply grateful for my incredible career at Eastman and most importantly, the lasting relationships I have made," said Golden. "I have great confidence in the company's future and in handing over the reins to someone as experienced as Clark."

Jordan has served in his current position since 2015 and brings experience in legal, product stewardship, regulatory affairs, trade and compliance to Eastman's executive team. Jordan was an Eastman in-house attorney from 1995 to 1997, in private practice from 1997 to 2007, and served as deputy general counsel and compliance officer, North America of Clariant Corporation from 2007 until 2011 when he rejoined Eastman. **BJ**



David Golden



Clark Jordan

The advertisement features a mountain biker in a black and white jersey riding a trail bike on a rocky path. In the background, there are snow-capped mountains under a cloudy sky. A large white circular logo with the letters 'CM' is positioned in the upper right. Below the logo, the text 'GET OFF THE BEATEN PATH' is written in large, bold, white capital letters. At the bottom right, the website 'CUMBERLANDMARKETING.COM' is displayed in white capital letters on a dark blue background.

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**Source: Dec. 2018 CVC Publication Audit Report.*

The reality of the Appalachian Highlands

by Mary Trigiani

As a two-time transplant to our region – first in 1966 and then in 2016 – I have always felt this is a place of accomplishment. Perhaps, as a child, it was the exposure to John Fox, Jr.'s work and life story, or having the renowned Virginia McChesney as my piano teacher, or learning about U2 pilot Francis Gary Powers' roots in Wise County, or watching the football great Carroll Dale carry his home in his heart. Despite the messages of the War on Poverty and the reality of the struggles in many corners of the region, then and now, when I was growing up, there was a fervent focus on achievement and appropriate ambition.

There was celebration, not pride. Perhaps today we are so afraid of getting above our raising that we neglect to amplify just what this region has meant to each of its states and the nation. Or stand upon our achievements for inspiration and emotional sustenance in the present day. Upon my re-entry in 2016, I was shocked to hear how much less we ponder and study the accomplishments of producers from every one of our counties, who made this region a force for much of the 20th century. In thinking about what they did, with much less than what we probably have, we do not have to reinvent the wheel.

Granted, we face an incredible challenge. The diaspora of native talent in search of fulfilling work. The need to absorb the impact of technology upon the industries that have been our stronghold. The evaporation of key industry sectors that have shaped our culture, not just our economy.

Exploring the underside of this challenge, we can cite five aspects of our reality that it is time to address. Workforce readiness and health. Education, from preschool through college. Traumatized children. Rural broadband deficiencies. The prevailing dependence, in thought and deed, upon large-scale employment that is literally futile in the short term without addressing the first four aspects.

What is the rest of our truth, our reality? We have advantages we can leverage. A robust network of educational institutions. Significant financial resources from state and federal coffers. Experienced government and business leaders. A growing acceptance that intra-regional competition is not cutting it. And: the growing fatigue, in the rest of the nation, with current urban and metropolitan experiences. People feel crowded, financially



stressed despite healthy salaries, and emotionally empty. The right business partners will know how to plant here if they can present to their employees a contemporary lifestyle, offering well-rounded lifestyle options. But first, we must stabilize ourselves by focusing on what is reasonable to seek in business partners and opportunities – and most important, invite them to help us solve the problems we define.

Our ability to act is limited by one thing: a lack of shared focus fueled by territorialism and competition among ourselves, around ideas, resources and power [the wrong side of ambition]. It's time now to take the inspiring talk of regionalism and put structure around it. Here is what I believe we can do, learning from the example of our forebears.

First, we invite opinion and perspective from all corners to identify industries and partners to pursue, setting goals we can measure and adjust rapidly. Second, we take quick inventory of what current money and initiatives we can apply to this purpose and we figure out how to integrate them – to achieve efficiency and measurable return-on-investment of government and private investment dollars. Third, we design and own the solutions to our problems, beginning with a focus on the specific industrial partners we want to attract and what they will need from us in mutually profitable partnership. We invite carefully-selected corporate partners to play ball right here, where they can make money if they focus their investments and not just hang around for the tax incentives. Fourth, we consider whether we are putting the marketing cart before the working horse. The processes we follow and the story we tell to position the region – in what has been called branding the region – are digestible only if we have something tangible to position. Pouring resources into the spinning of a yarn alone cannot change the game; it will, however, make us less credible to potential partners and investors.

We do have power, right here, right now. We can advocate for ourselves while we make it worth others' while to invest here. Creating a shared, measurable business objective and identifying the leaders to follow in public-private partnership is where we begin.

This is the first of a three-part editorial by Mary Trigiani, senior vice president, New Peoples Bank. Coming next: restructuring a regional economic base.

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