



AROUND BURKE

A community breakfast will be served at Glen Alpine United Methodist Church's Life Enrichment Center on Pea Ridge Street on Saturday, March 11 from 7 a.m. to 10 a.m. Donations are accepted.

The Glen Alpine Board of Aldermen will meet Monday, March 13, at 6 p.m. at Town Hall on Pitts Street. The planned agenda includes consideration of the Fire Department budget and storage options for Fire Department equipment. The board is also expected to consider using American Recovery Plan (ARP) funds for sidewalk improvements.

The Burke County Tourism Development Authority will host "Discover Burke Trails," a celebration of trails in Burke County, today from noon to 5 p.m. at CoMMA. The free event will feature presentations from a variety of conservationists and outdoor recreation advocates. More than 20 exhibitors and vendors are scheduled to attend. There will be an inflatable obstacle course available to kids. A raffle will be held for a Hobie kayak.

Free health fairs will be held March 13-16 at four locations in Burke County. No appointment is needed and participants will receive a basic exam, diabetes risk assessment, heart disease assessment, and dental screening. The health fairs will be held at:

- **Grace Episcopal Church**, 300 South King St., Morganton. Monday, March 13, 8 a.m. to Noon and 2-6 p.m.
- **St. Charles Catholic Church**, 728 West Union St., Morganton. Tuesday, March 14, 8 a.m. to Noon and 2-6 p.m.
- **East Burke Senior Center**, 101 Main Avenue West, Hildebran. Wednesday, March 15, 8 a.m. to Noon and 2-6 p.m.
- **New Day Christian Church**,

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Three Burke Schools to pilot vape detectors

Students will be criminally charged if possessing or using vapes with THC

By **ANGELA KUPER COPELAND**
Education Reporter
THE PAPER

A lot has changed since Motley Crue sang about smoking in the boys' room in 1985 (and Brownsville Station before that in 1973). In the last decade, tobacco-filled wrappers have been replaced by electronic devices that entice teens with sweet flavors.

How schools monitor e-cigarettes has likewise had to evolve.

Vaping doesn't have the tell-tale smell of traditional ciga-

rettes but detectors can alert school administrators when a student powers up an e-cigarette.

To help curb what district leadership sees as a growing problem, two Burke County middle schools (yet to be decided) and Hallyburton Academy will soon have vape detectors installed in student bathrooms. Each detector costs about \$1,000. Money from the facilities budget was used to make the purchase.

"We recognize that it's a Burke County problem. We recognize that it's a state prob-



BCPS / FOR THE PAPER

During the March 6 work session, school board members were shown examples of fourth-generation vaping devices used by students.

lem and a national problem," said Superintendent Dr. Mike Swan during the Burke County School Board's March 6 work

session.

The school district began looking more deeply into the vaping issue at the request of Burke County School Board member Leslie Taylor. She, and other board members, attended the North Carolina School Board Association conference this past November. One of the classes at the conference focused on the increasing use of vape devices and what surrounding school districts were doing to combat the problem, she said.

"After hearing from many teachers and administrators in our district, student vaping and use of e-cigarettes have

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The Industrial Commons plans \$40 million investment in Morganton

By **BILL POTEAT**
Editor
THE PAPER

The investment is a huge one, especially by Burke County standards — \$40 million to \$45 million dollars.

The goal is equally large — to develop a former furniture factory site that has sat vacant for years into a 28-acre Innovation Campus for The Industrial Commons.

Housed on that campus will not only be the main offices for The Industrial Commons but also incubation space for emerging manufacturing businesses, creative art space, and worker training and education facilities.

The on-campus buildings will be surrounded by nearly eight acres of public parks, with outdoor gathering areas, walking trails, and gardens.

"It is a big job with a lot of work to do," said Erin Kizer, Director of the Land for the Commons program at The Industrial Commons. "We're pulling resources from a lot of directions. It would be difficult for a private developer to profitably tackle a project of this magnitude due to the environmental and remediation issues



THOMAS WOLTZ / FOR THE PAPER

The 28-acre site for The Industrial Commons Innovation Campus was once home to a Drexel Furniture manufacturing plant.

that have to be addressed."

The "project of this magnitude" is unfolding at the site of the old Drexel Furniture Plant 3 & 5 on the East Fleming Drive bypass.

As The Industrial Commons notes in its literature, the Drexel 3 & 5 site has been a fixture of the Morganton community since the early 1900s. The site is where generations of

family members worked making some of the world's finest furniture.

Later, as most of Burke

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Not missing a beat

Silver Fork to celebrate 10th anniversary with music, new wine

By **MARTY QUEEN**
Senior Reporter
THE PAPER

Jennifer Foulides scrolls through the photos on her phone from last October, most of them taken in the wake of a fire that destroyed the Silver

Fork Winery Pavilion she and her husband, Ed Wisnieski, worked so hard to build.

Among the red-tinged images of the ruined structure, a single, black-and-white meme stands out; it's simply the word 'resilience,' followed by the dictionary definition. A friend of Jennifer's sent it to her in the days following the fire and she saved it to her camera roll.

As much as anything, that single word defines the current

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Jennifer Foulides and Ed Wisnieski are shown in the tasting room at Silver Fork Winery. The winery is hosting its 10th anniversary celebration in April.

MARTY QUEEN / THE PAPER



Andy Thompson



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COMMONS: \$40 million investment planned for Morganton

FROM PAGE 1A

County's furniture jobs moved offshore, it sat empty, a reminder of the challenges faced when work moves away. After a fire destroyed the vacant factory in 2009, the land sat empty and unattended for more than 13 years.

"We started looking at the Drexel property as far back as 2015," said Sara Chester, The Industrial Commons Co-Executive Director. "It was on a list of properties that Burke Development Inc. was targeting for clean-up and redevelopment."

"We were struck with how close the property is to downtown, walking distance," Chester continued. "We also recognized that in order for a property of that size and scale to be redeveloped, with the environmental and debris considerations, there was going to have to be a unique collaboration of public/private organizations as well as an inspiring vision."

The Industrial Commons was formed in 2015 in response to a need in Western North Carolina for an industry-focused organization to provide resources and support to firms and networks in a way that improves livelihoods and roots wealth in communities.

The Industrial Commons attempts to reach workers in unique ways, basing the effort on the theory of change where, workers are taught skills for work success, workers are organized into employee-owned firms and democratic workplaces, firms are organized into industry cooperatives to "be big by being small together," and ensuring the well-being of the community and work by focusing on stewardship and movement building.

An innovative concept such as the Innovation Campus would not be possible, both Kizer and Chester emphasized, without financial support from a variety of sources.

"This included an anonymous local donor in conjunction with The Rockefeller Foundation who helped us purchase the land," Chester said. "The Keneda Fund had the foresight to provide funding so we could engage in a thoughtful master planning and design process and have committed additional resources



FRANZI CHAREN / FOR THE PAPER

Mithun Architecture representatives and other members of The Industrial Commons team visit the Innovation Campus site on East Fleming Drive in Morganton.

es toward construction. We are grateful for each of these investments in making this ambitious vision come to life."

So when will brick and mortar begin to take shape on the campus?

"This year will be devoted to planning and design," Kizer responded. "Hopefully, by the middle of 2024, construction will be underway."

As to the manufacturing concerns expected to occupy space on the campus, Chester said, "We do plan for any businesses located at the campus to uphold high standards around environmental sustainability and to prioritize quality jobs and strong benefits for workers. We will look for businesses to co-locate on the campus that are 'triple bottom line' – focused on profit, people, and planet."

"We're looking at a truly beautiful campus," said Kizer. "There will be a lot of green space, a lot of outdoor space. We want it to be an inviting place to work. We want people to drive by, see the campus, and say, 'I'd like to work there.'"

Future plans also call for a community housing site to be developed adjacent to the campus.

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Right: The Industrial Commons conducts skilled training to engage young people in the manufacturing sector.

KARA JONES / FOR THE PAPER



THE INDUSTRIAL COMMONS / FOR THE PAPER

The draft site plan for The Industrial Commons' Innovation Campus, created by Nelson, Byrd, Woltz Landscape Architects, NVERSE Architects, and Bumgartner Urban Systems Strategy.



The Industrial Commons Priorities

The Industrial Commons has listed the following priorities for its new Innovation Campus on East Fleming Drive in Morganton:

BE A BEACON

- Be a beacon on site
- Be a beacon in Morganton
- Be a beacon for the region
- Be a beacon for the manufacturing industry

DEMONSTRATE CIRCULARITY ON SITE

- Reuse and repurpose existing site elements and materials
- Capture site runoff for irrigation, gray water systems, retention, or detention
- Generate energy and facilitate waste stream recycling

CULTIVATE IDENTITY

- Remember and lift up the story of place
- Choose materials that tell a story
- Create spaces for artistic expression
- Celebrate manufacturing

EVERYTHING IS A LEARNING OPPORTUNITY

- Design flexible learning and making spaces that anticipate evolving needs
- Implement innovative solutions to novel site issues
- Facilitate learning at all stages of life

NURTURE PEOPLE'S HEALTH AND HAPPINESS

- Build safe places to work, learn, and play
- Provide easily accessible outdoor space adjacent to indoor spaces
- Incorporate integrated adventure play and spaces for all

LEVERAGE THE INNOVATION CAMPUS TO CREATE NEW CONNECTIONS BETWEEN TIC AND MORGANTON

- Create a community hub
- Provide open space to support community-wide outdoor events
- Tie into existing and planned circulation networks
- Support community-facing campus

SUPPORT LOCAL NATURAL ECOSYSTEMS AND SUSTAINABLE BUILDING

- Be a model for green and sustainable construction
- Reintroduce regional native plant ecologies through planting design
- Invite people to interact with the landscape through edible planting, and community gardening

WINERY: Silver Fork to celebrate 10th anniversary with music, new wine

FROM PAGE 1A

state of affairs at Silver Fork. Jennifer and Ed have bounced back from the blaze, and so has the winery, which is set to host its 10-year anniversary on April 8.

These days, it's business as usual at the winery and vineyard, which offers a variety of wine styles, live music every Saturday, a relaxed atmosphere, and some gorgeous views overlooking the hillside on which 7 1/2 acres of vines grow.

"We're getting ready for our 10-year anniversary, and you have to look at where we've come from and what a blessing that was," said Jennifer. "There was a mourning period, but we're still very much focused on the vineyard and the winery and our 10-year anniversary and the café."

On a recent Wednesday morning, winery staff were conducting winter pruning beneath an overcast sky in the unseasonably warm weather. Jazz hummed softly on the outdoor sound system. It was the calm before the storm that is the warm-weather season at Silver Fork.

The venue hosts live music from 2 to 5 p.m. each Saturday during the spring and summer, as well as outdoor movies under the stars. Ed and Jennifer are working to convert one of the buildings on site into a café that will likely sell salads, soups, and paninis. They also plan to add 1,000 more grapevines this spring.

"In some way, shape, or form, every year, we've added or grown," said Ed. "So, when we added the winery, now with the café, there's always something.

"There's never a dull mo-



JENNIFER FOULIDES / FOR THE PAPER

Silver Fork Winery is celebrating its 10th anniversary this spring.



JENNIFER FOULIDES / FOR THE PAPER

Grapevines are full in this photo from Silver Fork Winery.

ment. You can look everywhere around and say, 'I've got to fix that, dig that hole,' whatever. We have to leave here to relax," he added with a smile.

There's a new addition to the wine list as well, which arrived just in time for the 10th anniversary.

"We've just released a new

white blend called a blanco, which is named after my late pup, Lil Bear," said Jennifer. "There are a lot of good things coming."

The anniversary shindig will feature a food truck and live music from The Alligators and Gotcha Groove from noon to 6 p.m.

Later in the year, the winery will host a charity event in honor of the first responders who rushed to the scene of the fire last fall.

The winery's pavilion was a popular wedding location for six years, and Silver Fork was booked for weddings a year and a half in advance when the fire, presumably caused by the electrical system, took down

'There are a lot of good things coming.'

JENNIFER FOULIDES, SILVER FORK OWNER

the massive structure. The building's concrete foundation is still in place, along with infrastructure – power, water, and sewer – so the couple is determined to make use of the space eventually.

There are no plans to host weddings again, but they've considered turning the former pavilion into a new tasting room or a larger area for live music.

"Whatever we put there, it will be beautiful," Jennifer said. "We can't let it (the fire) overshadow what we are continuing to grow here. We have a tremendous customer base and it's growing. We meet new people all the time that are traveling through. I think the area of Burke County is growing."

Throughout the changes that have occurred over the years, the couple has maintained focus on the wine and on providing patrons with delightful afternoons.

"It's (the focus) been the same — sustaining and growing the vines to the best of our abilities, weathering the weather, and that has been a huge challenge for us we could not have predicted, of how Mother Nature puts a monkey wrench in all plans," Jennifer said.

"We are here for the long haul. We're not going anywhere."

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