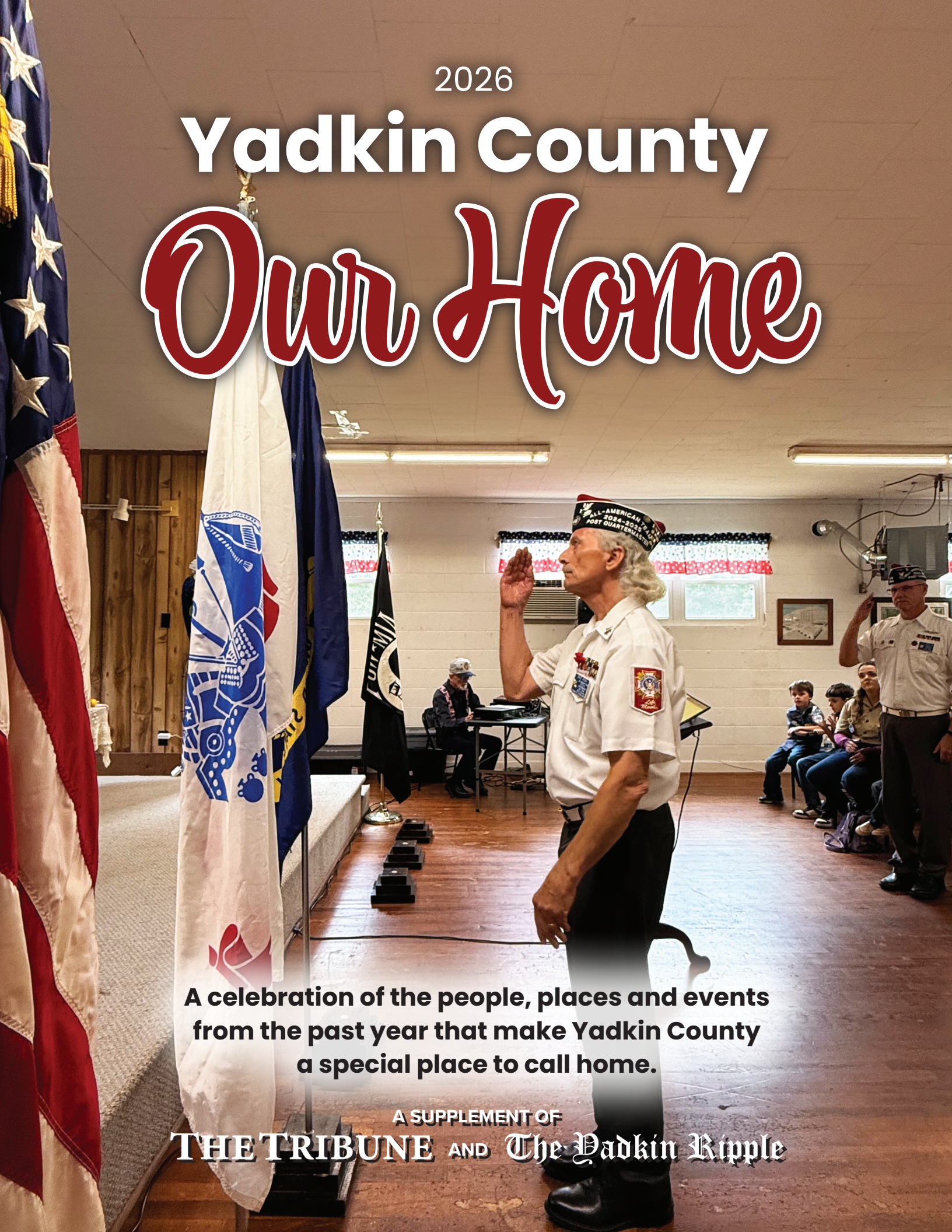


2026

Yadkin County *Our Home*



**A celebration of the people, places and events
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Gathering celebrates COMMUNITY, LEGACY

KITSEY BURNS HARRISON | kburns@yadkinripple

It was perfect weather for a weekend cookout and celebration in Jonesville and that's just what was happening as part of the fourth annual Gathering held at Lila Swaim Park on Sept. 20-21, 2025. The Gathering is an event celebrating the Black communities of Jonesville, Elkin and the surrounding areas, though all are invited to take part in the festivities.

During the weekend there was plenty of food, as well as live music, a car show, games and more.

Melissa Sales, of Roaring River, was among the attendees for the celebration with her booth offering permanent jewelry. She said the best thing about the Gathering was the sense of community.

"Just gathering together, just the sense of family and community means a lot," she said. "Especially this day and time, closeness is always good. And, you know, we invite anybody and everybody to come. It's not just race, you know, it's for all people."

Cynthia Scott, daughter of the late Elizabeth Barker Johnson, was also part of the Gathering festivities. Scott had a booth at the event collecting donations for a foundation in her mother's memory. Johnson served in the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion in Europe during World War II. This all-Black, all-female division was recently honored in a film by director Tyler Perry and Johnson was among the women depicted in the movie.

Scott said the film made her very happy as it showcased



KITSEY BURNS HARRISON

Photos of the late PFC. Elizabeth Barker Johnson on display at the Gathering celebration held in Jonesville over the weekend. Johnson was recently portrayed on the big screen in the film *The Six Triple Eight*, about an all-Black female Postal Battalion during World War II. There is a local foundation and scholarship in Johnson's memory.

a forgotten, but important part of history of which her mother was a part.

"Tyler Perry did have a vision. He wanted people to see exactly what these ladies went through when they were over in England and France during the war. He wanted people to see what their efforts were to help with the war efforts," she said.

Scott even had the opportunity to chat with the actor, Kylie Jefferson, who portrayed her mother in the film. She said Jefferson asked specifically if her mother liked to dance, because she is a professional dancer and there was to be a dance scene featuring Johnson's character in the movie. Scott said she didn't know, but later when they saw the film, her daughter commented on the dancing.

"Grandma liked to do the jitterbug," she said.

"And I did not know that," Scott said. "When my mother would talk to us, not that she was trying to keep anything for everybody, but she would tell me some stories, and she would tell my younger daughter some stories, tell my older daughter some stories." Together the family has pieced together more of the full picture of her mother's life before them.

Johnson's legacy is more than just her time in the military, she also features prominently in local history, being the first Black teacher at Elkin High School, right after segregation was ended. Johnson had a long career in education and now there is a local scholarship in her memory. Scott said the scholarship has now expanded to a foundation with future plans to do more in Johnson's honor. To learn more about the foundation, visit pfcelizabetchjohnsonfoundation.org.



KITSEY BURNS HARRISON

Area residents gather for a fun celebration and time of fellowship at Lila Swaim Park in Jonesville on Saturday as part of the annual Gathering event.



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Yadkin area veterans

MARK MEMORIAL DAY

KITSEY BURNS HARRISON | kburns@yadkinripple

The Yadkin County Veterans Council hosted its annual Memorial Day ceremony on May 25 at the Yadkin VFW Post 10346 in Hamptonville. Numerous area veterans and community members gathered to mark the solemn occasion honoring those in military service who have perished in battle.

Yadkin Scout Troop 699 lead the pledge of allegiance and students from Starmount High School sang the national anthem.

Special guest speaker for the day was American Legion North Carolina State Post Commander Devell "Bo" Durham Jr. Durham shared the numerous veteran organizations he has long been involved with, including the Marine Corps League, Veterans of Foreign Wars and numerous others.

Durham shared the poignancy of his experiences speaking with Gold Star families, those who have lost a loved one in service to the nation.

"On such occasions, it is very difficult to put into words,"



KITSEY BURNS HARRISON
American Legion State Commander Devell "Bo" Durham speaks at the 2026 Yadkin County Memorial Day ceremony.



KITSEY BURNS HARRISON
Members of the Yadkin County Veterans Council present the flags of each branch of service during a Memorial Day ceremony.

he said. "The thoughts and emotions that we feel as we honor our military service members of the past. That patriotism carries a high price. Because freedom is not free."

"Let us also pause to remember those who came home. . . and afterwards sacrificed their lives while serving others throughout their community," he said. "Not all veterans have seen war, but a common denominator is that we have a bond that we all share as our own, which we express our willingness to die while defending this nation."



KITSEY BURNS HARRISON

Attendees at the 2026 Memorial Day ceremony at the Yadkin VFW Post 10346 salute during the singing of the national anthem.



KITSEY BURNS HARRISON

Members of Scout Troop 699 lead the pledge of allegiance at a Memorial Day ceremony held in Hamptonville at VFW Post 10346.

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COURTESY PHOTO

Community leaders break ground for an innovated new childcare center in Yadkin County.

GROUND *Breaking* HELD FOR MAMA JEWELL'S ChildPlex

Mama Jewell's ChildPlex to bring more child care options for Yadkin County

STAFF REPORT

More than 100 community leaders, partners, and supporters from around the state gathered on May 18, 2026 to celebrate the groundbreaking of Mama Jewell's ChildPlex, a transformative early childhood education facility designed to expand access to high-quality child care in Yadkin County.

Organizers said the "ChildPlex represents a bold, community-driven response to a persistent child care shortage impacting families, employers, and economic growth across the region." Once completed, the facility will serve as a scalable, sustainable model for increasing child care capacity while maintaining high standards of quality.

"This groundbreaking marks an important step forward



COURTESY PHOTO

Carolyn Choplin, executive director of Smart Start of Yadkin County, speaks at a ground breaking ceremony for the new Mama Jewell's ChildPlex.

for our community," said Bobby Todd, President of the Yadkin Economic Development Partnership. "Mama Jewell's ChildPlex is more than a building — it's an investment in our children, our workforce, and the future of Yadkin County."

Over the past decade, Yadkin County has experienced a significant decline in licensed child care options, leaving many families without reliable care and employers struggling to attract and retain workers. The ChildPlex



COURTESY PHOTO

A local mother, Sarah Allen, along with her son, speaks at a ground breaking ceremony for a new childcare center in Yadkinville.

is designed to help close this gap through a multi-unit facility with shared spaces owned by the Partnership and managed by Smart Start of Yadkin County. The facility will house six new child care businesses — expanding capacity while supporting providers with a sustainable operating model.

“The need for accessible, high-quality early childhood education has never been greater,” said Carolyn Choplin, Executive Director, Smart Start of Yadkin County. “Mama Jewell’s ChildPlex is an innovative solution that will increase capacity, expand the early childhood workforce, and create a lasting impact for children and families in Yadkin County.”

The project has reached 70% of its fundraising goal to date, with support from a growing network of foundations, government partners, businesses, and individual donors. Leaders continue to seek additional partners to help bring the project fully to life.

“Mama Jewell’s ChildPlex reflects what is possible when a community comes together around a shared challenge,” said Kevin Austin of Austin Electrical Enclosures and a member of the ChildPlex Planning Team. “We are grateful for the support that has brought us this far and invite others to join us in completing this important work.”

The groundbreaking ceremony took place in Yadkinville at the corner of Progress Lane and Hawthorne Avenue, marking a major milestone for the project and the community it will serve. Wishon & Carter Builders, Inc. is the contractor selected for the project.

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THEATER

Program

BRINGS CLASSIC 'CHARLOTTE'S WEB' TO THE STAGE

'Charlotte's Web' on the stage in Yadkinville

STAFF REPORT

The Willingham Performing Arts Academy presented "Charlotte's Web" on the Willingham Theater stage for two public performances on Feb. 28 and March 1, 2026. The production was part of the Yadkin Arts Council's seventh annual "Page to Stage" program which was also presented to all of the Yadkin County third and fourth graders over the course of the week of Feb. 23-27. This opportunity was made possible through the support of the Yadkin County School System with additional grant funding provided by the Shallow Ford Foundation and Sheetz, Inc.

The "Page to Stage" program is based on the concept of taking a popular children's book and bringing it to life on stage as a play or musical. The Willingham Performing Arts Academy casts local grade school students in the character roles giving them the opportunity to develop their skills on stage. This opportunity not only fuels their



COURTESY PHOTO

Student performers at the Willingham Performing Arts Academy work with puppets and props in preparation for a performance of "Charlotte's Web."

ambition to continue with training and education in the arts as they progress to an institution of higher learning, it also has been concluded that students who participated in arts education programs were shown to have more positive academic and social outcomes.

In addition to bringing all of the third and fourth grade students over to the Willingham Theater to experience the show live in person, the Yadkin Arts Council also purchased E.B. White's Classic Box Sets (Charlotte's Web, Stuart Little, and The Trumpet of the Swan) for all of the participating classrooms, school's media centers, and the public libraries in Yadkin County.

Based on the beloved book by E.B. White, Charlotte's Web is a beautiful, knowing play about friendship featuring madcap and endearing farm animals: Wilbur, the irresistible young pig who desperately wants to avoid the butcher; Fern, a girl who understands what animals say to each other; Templeton, the gluttonous rat who can occasionally be talked into a good deed; and, most of all, the extraordinary spider, Charlotte, who proves to be "a true friend and a good writer." Determined to save Wilbur, Charlotte begins her campaign with the "miracle" of her web in which she writes, "Some pig." It's the beginning of a victorious campaign which ultimately ends with the now-safe Wilbur doing what is most important to Charlotte.

The cast and crew featured Emma Aguilar, Ciara Bengel, Carl Coston, Carlie Coston, Aiden Ginsburg, Ashlynn Ginsburg, Ava Ginsberg, Marlee Hale, and Clarence Mehki Powell, and is directed by Nick Zayas; set design, paint, & puppets by Edward C Kluttz III, stage management by Becky Beamguard, sound designer/technician by Timothy Harrison, lighting design by Tyler Matanick, and props management by Elijah Golden.



COURTESY PHOTO

Students of the Willingham Performing Arts Academy in Yadkinville prepare for a production of "Charlotte's Web" to be performed for area school children as well as the public.

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Legendary

STARMOUNT COACH B.W. HOLT

earns spot in NCHSAA Hall of Fame

ROBERT MONEY | robert.money@thestokesnews.com

CHAPEL HILL — Beecher “B.W.” Holt spent four decades building winners, teaching discipline and quietly becoming one of the most successful high school football coaches North Carolina has ever produced. Now, the Bristol, Tenn., resident is getting his due.

The North Carolina High School Athletic Association announced Holt as a member of its Hall of Fame Class of 2026, honoring a coaching career that spanned more than 40 years and produced a record of 347-120-2, ranking him among the winningest coaches in state history. The NCHSAA will host a private reception for the new inductees on April 21 at its Chapel Hill office before the class is formally inducted during a ceremony on Aug. 15 at the Grandover Resort in Greensboro.

Holt’s longest and most storied tenure came at Starmount High School in Boonville, where he served as head coach from 1979 to 1997. In 18 seasons with the Rams, he compiled a record of 174-51-2, claimed 12 conference championships and guided his program to the state playoffs 13 times, posting a 20-13 postseason record. His teams reached four regional championship games, winning titles in 1989, 1990, 1996 and 1997. Starmount’s success under Holt was built on discipline, a smothering defensive identity and a standard of excellence that players carried long after their playing days ended.

Before arriving at Starmount, Holt had already established a winning reputation at Franklinton High School, where he posted back-to-back undefeated seasons in Class 1-A. He later added stops at Rocky Mount Academy and Rocky Mount High School, accumulating career totals that few coaches in North Carolina history can match.

“Coach Holt is so special to the folks in the Starmount community. He was an outstanding coach, teacher, and leader. His former players are so loyal to him and it’s a product of his tough love and work ethic he instilled in his players,” said Deanna King.

King, who has served as Starmount’s statistician and information director for years, noted that Holt’s bond with the program has never dimmed, even from hundreds of miles away. “He still is a very prominent supporter of Starmount Athletics by coming to several events despite



STARMOUNT HIGH SCHOOL

B.W. Holt served as Starmount’s head football coach from 1979 to 1997, compiling a 174-51-2 record and 12 conference championships.

living in Bristol, Tenn.,” she said. “I’m so happy for him to receive this honor.”

Holt joins seven other honorees in the Class of 2026: Michael Baker, Zoe Bell, Patty Evers, Greg Frey, Vicki Hamilton, Leonardo “Leo” Lockhart and Bobby Reynolds. The class collectively represents decades of leadership across coaching, administration, officiating and advocacy for student-athletes throughout the state.

The NCHSAA Hall of Fame recognizes individuals who have made significant and lasting contributions to high school athletics through service, leadership and achievement. The Aug. 15 induction ceremony at the Grandover Resort in Greensboro will mark the official welcome of the Class of 2026 into that distinguished company, and for the coaches, players and families who called Starmount home under Holt’s watch, it will be a moment long in the making.

STARMOUNT RECORD (1979–1997)

Overall: 174-51-2 (.767)

Conference championships: 12 (1984–1996)

State playoff record: 20-13 (.606) — 13 seasons

Regional championships: 4 (1989, 1990, 1996, 1997)



Honorees of the Class of 2026 Forbush Hall of Fame.

COURTESY PHOTO

FORBUSH HIGH School

INDUCTS NEW MEMBERS INTO HALL OF FAME



Scott Pipes is inducted into the Forbush High School Hall of Fame.

COURTESY PHOTO

STAFF REPORT

An induction ceremony for the Forbush High School Hall of Fame was held Feb. 13, 2026. The induction class of 2026 included several student athletes, a former teacher and coach, as well as the 1977 softball team.

The honorees for 2026 are:

SCOTT PIPES

Student Athlete 1989-1993

Scott Pipes attended Forbush High School from 1989–1993 and established himself as one of the most accomplished student-athletes in school history. A dedicated multi-sport competitor, Scott wrestled at the varsity level all four years, played football for two years, and ran cross-country for one year. Scott’s greatest success came in wrestling, where his achievements set a lasting standard at Forbush. He qualified for the 1A/2A State Wrestling Tournament all four years and earned All-Conference honors each season. He was a three-time conference champion and placed at the regional tournament every year, finishing 4th in 1990, 2nd in 1991 and 1992, and winning the regional championship in 1993. His senior season was historic, as Scott captured the 171-pound 2A–1A State Championship, becoming Forbush High School’s first individual sport state champion. He also placed 16th nationally at the National Championships and

was named the 1993 Male Falcon of the Year. After high school, Scott continued a life of leadership and service. He has served on the Yadkin County Board of Adjustments since 2014 and dedicated 25 years to the North Carolina Department of Transportation, most recently as Resident Engineer for Wilkes and Ashe counties. A Licensed Professional Land Surveyor, he is also a successful business owner. Scott reflects on his journey with gratitude, stating, “My life has been full of blessings, none greater than Jesus Christ and my family!”

RICKY HAYES

Student Athlete 1967-1971

Ricky Hayes has been a part of Forbush High School since its doors were opened in 1967. As a part of Forbush’s first freshman class, Ricky’s connection to the school is unmatched by most — a connection that is exemplified by his commitment to Forbush, not only as a student, but also as a servant of his community. Ricky was very successful as a student-athlete during his high school years. He enjoyed not only individual success, but was also a part of some of the most accomplished teams in school history. He was the starting quarterback for the 1970 football team which finished the regular season as the 9-1 Northwest Conference champions and qualified for the quarterfinals of the state playoffs. In a time period marked by teams running the football, Ricky threw for 800 yards and 12



COURTESY PHOTO

Ricky Hayes is inducted into the Forbush High School Hall of Fame.

touchdowns leading to his All-Conference selection. In the same school year, Ricky was also a major contributor on one of the best baseball teams in school history. He was the starting shortstop for the 1971 baseball team which were the conference and regional champions before falling in the state championship series. After graduation, Ricky would continue to be a pillar of the Forbush community. He served his community as a volunteer firefighter, a volunteer youth coach in multiple sports, and a faithful member of his church, Forbush Friends Meeting. Even his career, 37 years with Zirus, focused on impacting his community. If the expression, a community is only as strong as its members, is true, then the Forbush community is strong and its strength comes from people like Ricky Hayes.

MATT PRUITT

Teacher/Coach 1997-2023

Matt Pruitt, a lifelong Yadkin County resident, grew up in the Lone Hickory community, where he attended Forbush High School, graduating in 1988. After high school, Matt served our country in the US Army as a Cavalry Scout in an M3 Bradley Cavalry Fighting Vehicle. Upon completing his military service, he attended his beloved Appalachian State University. He returned to Forbush High School to teach and coach for his entire career, where he became affectionately known as Coach Pruitt. He taught, coached, and served as Athletic Director throughout his nearly 25-year career. Coach Pruitt coached men's and women's golf, leading the men's team to 7 conference championships with 6 state finalists and the women to 11 trips for individuals to the state finals. He is best remembered, however, for being the head coach of a dominant women's softball team. After 1 year of coaching JVs, Coach Pruitt was quickly promoted to head varsity coach during the 1998-1999 season. Over his 7 years as head coach, he amassed a 189-24 record, 7 conference championships, 7 state quarterfinalists, 4 state finals appearances, and 3 consecutive state championships in 2002, 2003, and 2004. His influence on athletics at Forbush did not stop there. He became Athletic Director in 2018, implementing several initiatives still in place today, including the Forbush High School Hall of Fame. After retiring, Coach Pruitt continues to serve his community in various capacities,



COURTESY PHOTO

Matt Pruitt is inducted into the Forbush High School Hall of Fame.

including Driver Education Instructor and Coordinator for Yadkin County Schools. Coach Pruitt's legacy and impact on students, athletes, and the community will continue to endure.

ALLISON MCCARN DEIANA

Student Athlete 1999-2003

Allison McCarn Deiana exemplifies the very best of Forbush High School: an exceptional scholar, a dedicated performer, and a leader whose impact now reaches across the world. During her time at Forbush, Allison was a multi-sport cheerleader for football, basketball, and competition



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teams, an active member of the drama program, and the Valedictorian of her senior class. Her artistic talents extended across campus as a member and accompanist for both show and concert choirs, a flutist in concert band, a keyboardist for jazz band, and a rhythm-section musician for marching band. After graduating from Forbush, Allison earned her B.S. from North Carolina State University and went on to complete her Ph.D. in experimental high-energy particle physics at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She then served as a post-doctoral researcher at the University of Michigan, contributing to major discoveries within the ATLAS Collaboration at the CERN Large Hadron Collider. In 2018, Allison joined Southern Methodist University, where she progressed from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor in 2024. Her primary research focuses on the observation of pair-produced Higgs Bosons, as well as designing firmware and testing hardware for next-generation ATLAS Detector upgrades. She continues to teach and mentor the next generation of physicists while serving as a qualified author within the ATLAS Collaboration. Allison's journey, from Forbush Falcon to internationally recognized scientist, stands as a powerful testament to curiosity, scholarship, and excellence.

1977 SOFTBALL TEAM

Head Coach: Linda McCormick
Record 29-0 Overall



COURTESY PHOTO
Allison McCarn Deiana is inducted into the Forbush High School Hall of Fame.

- Northwest 3A Conference Champions
- 1977 NCHSAA Slow Pitch Western Regional Champions
- 1977 NCHSAA Slow Pitch 3A State Champions

3A State Final: Forbush vs Saratoga
(Gm 1: 16-7, Gm 2: 10-0)

1977 Team:

Danita Miller, Debbie Hill, Anita Brown,
Terry Kimmer, Kim Hobson, Joyce Sparks,
Melissa Speas, Charlene Miller, Teresa Bruce,
Donna White, Kim Myers, Carla Glenn,
Pam Glenn, Sharon Speer, Donna Johnson



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NEW RECREATION PARK, RIVER ACCESS

Unveiled

IN JONESVILLE

KITSEY BURNS HARRISON | kburns@yadkinripple.com

During the annual N.C. Trail Days festival in June of 2026, a new park and recreation area was officially unveiled in the town of Jonesville. Local officials gathered on June 4 for a grand opening ceremony of the park which features trails, playgrounds, disc golf and river access.

During the grand opening ceremony, Jonesville Mayor Anita Darnell reflected on the journey to create the park, sharing, "In 2018, the town of Jonesville received a grant from the North Carolina Clear Water Management Trust Fund in the amount of \$450,000 to help purchase property on which we stand today, 154-acres of beautiful land. In 2024, the town received a legislated, directed grant, facilitated by Senator Eddie Settle, in the amount of 3.4 million dollars, to develop the property into recreation, that we will be celebrating today. Also, in 2024, the town was awarded a grant, North Carolina Parks and Recreation Trust Fund, in the amount of \$558,000 to assist in preserving the nature resources that make this area so special."

"Today, we proudly unveil the Double Bluff recreation destination, along the Yadkin River, the park features more



KITSEY BURNS HARRISON

Why let the kids have all the fun? Jonesville Mayor Anita Darnell gives the slide a go at the newly unveiled Double Bluff recreation area on N.C. 67.

than five miles of walking, hiking, and running trails, more than five miles of mountain bike trails, an 18-hole disc golf course, a playground for families and children, river access for boating and fishing, picnic shelters, and dress room facilities," she continued. "This project represents years of planning, partnership, and investment in the future of our community. It holds opportunities for recreation, promotes healthy, lifestyles, encourages tourism, and preserves the natural beauty of the Yadkin River for generations to come."



KITSEY BURNS HARRISON

River access point and boat ramp at the newly unveiled Double Bluff recreation area in Jonesville.



KITSEY BURNS HARRISON

Toby Butcher, project manager for the Jonesville Double Bluff recreation area, speaks at the grand opening of the park on June 4.

Throughout the Trail Days weekend, several events were held at the new park as well as multiple locations in the nearby area in Elkin, as well as Stone Mountain State Park.

N.C. Trails Days festival was conceived to promote tourism and travel for nature lovers to enjoy the natural beauty of the region and showcase the multiple trails in Elkin and Jonesville.



A bridge along one of the trails at the Double Bluff recreation area in Jonesville.

KITSEY BURNS HARRISON

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NEW JONESVILLE Library NOW OPEN

Jonesville celebrates
new library building

KITSEY BURNS HARRISON | kburns@yadkinripple.com

It was a picture perfect fall day as a crowd gathered in November of 2025 to celebrate the opening of the brand new Jonesville Public Library. The newly constructed building has been a longtime dream for the community as the library has bounced around to various locations over the past few years.

The library took a hit, literally, in June of 2025 when a tree fell on its temporary location at West Main St., essentially shuttering the library for months. Despite no longer having its physical space with books, however, library staff continued offering special programs at Town Hall and Lila Swaim Park.

Jonesville Mayor Anita Darnell welcomed attendees to the ribbon cutting ceremony held late last year, noting the important "milestone" for the town.

"This library has been in years in making, shaped by vision, hard work, and the belief of every person in Jonesville," said Darnell. "We all deserve a space to grow, discover, and to dream. It's a statement to what we can



KITSEY BURNS HARRISON

Jonesville Mayor Anita Darnell, joined by Jonesville Town Council, speaks at a ribbon cutting ceremony held Friday for the new Jonesville Public Library.

accomplish when we work together."

"The library belongs to us all, and I hope each one of you will make it a meaningful part of your lives here," Darnell added.

Darnell thanked the numerous leaders, donors and team that worked together to fundraise, design and construct the new building.

"Today, we're just not cutting a ribbon," she said. "We are opening the doors to opportunity for lifelong learning for many generations in our town. The library represents what we can do when a community comes together and shares a vision, a vision to invest in our futures."

The names of former Jonesville librarians, the late Cynthia Allred and Barbara "Doobie" Gilpin, were invoked with heartfelt remembrance during the ceremony.

"Your dreams are now a reality," reflected Wendy Thompson, interim town manager.

"This library belongs to you," Thompson said to patrons gathered for the ceremony. "May it always be a place where curiosity is encouraged; learning is celebrated and everyone feels at home. We began this journey by saying together, 'we can.' Today we celebrate because together we all did. We created not just a book warehouse, but a gymnasium for the mind. So please come here and go everywhere."

Jonesville Library Branch Manager Jennifer Rogers, with much emotion, also spoke in celebration of the new building.

"It's the realization of a shared dream," she said. She noted going back to school for her masters degree in Library and Information Sciences, "because, I believe, fundamentally, in the power of public libraries."

"Today, I couldn't be more honored to stand before you as we open the doors to our new permanent home. The journey to this moment has been one of true community dedication. The Jonesville Public Library has always been a



KITSEY BURNS HARRISON

Jonesville Library Branch Manager Jennifer Rogers, Jonesville Mayor Anita Darnell and Mendy Peles of the Jonesville Friends of the Library officially cut the ribbon for the brand new Jonesville Public Library building located at 112 N. Swaim St.

beacon of knowledge. Since 2016, that light has often had to shine from different locations. The shadows were cast when we lost two amazing people; Barbara in 2018 and Cynthia in 2020. And finally, the lights seemed the darkest when the tree fell on our temporary location back in the summer. However, that flame was still there.”

“We have proven that a library isn’t just a place,” Rogers continued. “It’s the service that a library can provide, and most of all, it’s the people that are behind the library supporting it.”

Rogers offered thanks to all those involved in making this longtime dream of a permanent building for the library a reality.

“As a librarian, I often hear, why are libraries so important when you have the whole world at your fingertips,” Rogers said. “My answer is always the same. A public library is so much more than books. For the youngest patrons, the library is their first class room. It’s where they discover the magic of a story, and they start to build that foundational literacy skills that’s going to help shape their entire lives. Our youth programs are not just about reading. It’s about fostering creativity, critical thinking, and developing that lifelong love of learning.”

“And for adults, the library is a vital Resource Center,” she continued. “It’s a place for job seekers to access free WiFi, computers. It’s a meeting space, and it’s a trusted source for accurate information. It’s the ultimate expression of equity and access, offering resources to absolutely everyone, regardless of their age, their income, or their background. From my point of view, the public library is the ultimate connector. It connects people to knowledge, connects neighbors to each other, and it connects our past, to our future. It’s a quiet space to reflect, and it’s a vibrant space to collaborate, in a world that can feel divided,



KITSEY BURNS HARRISON

A crowd gathers for a ribbon cutting ceremony for the new Jonesville Public Library.

sometimes a public library remains the cherished, unifying place. It’s something that belongs to each and every one of us that’s standing here today. It’s the place where every voice is heard, every question is valued, and every dream can begin. So when you come in, check out a book, use a computer, attend a program, or just sit for a moment and realize that dreams really do come true. This is a beautiful new chapter for the Jonesville Library novel, and it begins right now. Welcome home.”

Patrons and supporters, including a class of local school children, cheered as the ribbon was officially cut and all were invited inside to tour the new facility and enjoy snacks and a beautiful book-themed cake.



KITSEY BURNS HARRISON

A beautiful book-themed cake at a ribbon cutting ceremony for the new Jonesville Public Library building.

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JONESVILLE Winery

nominated for 'American
Winery of the Year' by
Wine Enthusiast

KITSEY BURNS HARRISON | kburns@yadkinripple

Dynamis Estate Wines, located in Jonesville, was nominated last fall for the prestigious American Winery of the Year honor by Wine Enthusiast magazine. It was the only North Carolina winery to be selected among the five nominees.

Dynamis was founded in 2019 at a historic property in Jonesville that was the former Highland Orchards which operated from 1910 to 1975, growing apples, peaches and grains. After decades of dormancy, the 1,500-acre property was purchased by a private owner who planted thirty acres of grapes in 2015 to 2017.

Local winemakers Matheson Worrell and Katy Kidd had used grapes from the property to produce wines for another area winery, which then led to a vision for a luxury winery located at the site that features soil producing



KITSEY BURNS HARRISON

Dynamis co-owner and Winemaker Matheson Worrell in the barrel room.

excellent wine grapes. The vineyard's location, at 1,640 feet above sea-level, also offers excellent growing conditions.

The hard work and dedication to old-world techniques paired with modern precision has paid off for Dynamis with recognition from Wine Enthusiast.

"This recognition validates the vision we had long ago to create world-class that speak with the voice of this mountain," said Worrell. "From day one, we combined Burgundian discipline with Appalachian resilience, and today our wines carry both precision and soul."

"Wine is a story," explained Kidd, at a media event held recently to announce their nomination. Both she and Worrell spoke about their desire to stay true to wine making techniques employed for generations upon generations and using the terroir of this unique site in the Yadkin Valley to produce not only award-winning wines, but wines that will be celebrated and shared by families and friends around their tables.

Vineyard Manager Joseph Geller shared details about the rocky soil where the vines are planted that make for excellent drainage. The height of the location is another unique feature that provides some protection from heavy frosts as the cold will often settle in low-lying areas.

Dynamis differs from other local wineries, with its focus on seated tastings that provide an elevated guest experience. Dynamis' wine club is a special experience, too, as members enjoy wine pick-up parties at the luxury home located on property with live music, food and more.

To learn more about Dynamis Estate Wines or to schedule a tasting or tour, visit Dynamisestatewines.com.



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Dynamis co-owner and Vineyard Manager Joseph Geller leads a tour and tasting in the vineyard.



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