

2017 TOE RIVER STUDIO TOUR

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MITCHELL NEWS-JOURNAL

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Mission Health proposal drawing criticism

Petition opposing move of labor, delivery services to Marion has nearly 600 signatures

By BRANDON ROBERTS
Editor

SPRUCE PINE – While a decision looms about whether Mission Health will move its labor and delivery services offered at Blue Ridge Regional to McDowell Hospital in Marion, one area man has started an online petition opposing the idea.

Mission Health CEO Ron Paulus was quoted in the Asheville Citizen-Times as saying a pro-

posal to combine the programs at McDowell and Blue Ridge Regional is being reviewed. The proposal eliminates labor and delivery services at Blue Ridge Regional.

Logan Elliott, of Celso, is a former employee at Blue Ridge Regional Hospital. He started the change.org petition May 19 titled "Save Blue Ridge Regional Hospital's OB Department" and as of press time it has gotten 590 sup-

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porters. Elliott plans to have the petition delivered to Paulus once it receives 1,000 signatures.

"I made this petition because I saw the news and knew after the wonderful care my wife received with our two children at BRRH I had to do my part," Elliott said. "This small community is one

big family, and having a baby is a very important part of that. I feel if we lose our nurses and care at BRRH everyone will suffer."

Elliott knows the petition may not sway the decision.

"It's a long shot," he said. "But worth it just to let them know how unhappy we are."

Mission Health made a similar decision in April, announcing it was ending labor and delivery services at Angel Medical Center

in Franklin by July.

Blue Ridge Regional Hospital performed 173 deliveries in 2016, which was the third fewest in the state, and McDowell handled 187, the state's fifth fewest, according to Paulus' statement in the Citizen-Times.

Mission Health plans to open a new hospital in Marion early next year with updated and expanded labor and delivery services and equipment.

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Harris auditorium officially named for Bob and Betty Young

By BRANDON ROBERTS
Editor

The newly renovated auditorium at Harris Middle School officially has a name after the Mitchell County Board of Education dedicated the Robert and Betty Young Memorial Auditorium May 15.

Robert G. Young was born in Mitchell County to the late Frank B. and Isabella Wilson Young. He graduated from Bowman High School in 1943 and received his bachelor's degree in social studies and physical education from Appalachian State University in 1948. He received a master's degree in administration in 1955 and a vocational education degree from North Carolina State University in 1971.

Before his teaching career in education, Bob worked as a firefighter on the Clinchfield Railroad. He began his teaching

career in Davie County, where he taught social studies and coached a winning football team for seven years. He spent the next 17 years as principal of Harris High School.

During the summer, he served as a park ranger at Mount Mitchell State Park and received the "Volunteer of the Year" award from the Southern Appalachian Conservancy.

After leaving Harris High School as principal, Bob worked as Superintendent of Mitchell County Schools for the next four years. After retirement, he also served on the Mitchell County Board of Education for 16 years. During that time, he was on the North Carolina School Boards Association, where he was first vice president. Bob also served on the board of the Mayland Community College Trustees for nine

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OPPORTUNITY FOR ART



NEWS-JOURNAL PHOTO/BRANDON ROBERTS

A partnership among Mayland Early College High School, Penland School of Crafts and Rural Education Partners of Mitchell County allowed three students to create a pair of murals that will be displayed at the school. Pictured, from left, is Mayland Early College High School Principal Stacie Burleson, students Lily Adams, of Lenior, Amber Vance, of Newland, and Katie McMahan, of Spruce Pine, muralist and project leader Rhea Ormond and Penland School of Crafts Community Collaboration Manager Stacey Lane.

Students create murals through partnership

By BRANDON ROBERTS
Editor

When Mayland Early College High School Principal Stacie Burleson wanted to create murals for the school, she knew exactly

what to do.

She formed a partnership with Penland School of Crafts Manager of Community Collaboration Stacey Lane and Rural Education Partners of Mitchell County to find local

artists and students to create two murals – one of food to hang in the school's cafeteria and another of a wolf to fill a blank hallway wall space in the back of the building.

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NEWS-JOURNAL PHOTO/BRANDON ROBERTS

Thom Hedman assesses the inventory while giving away free groceries this past Wednesday on Oak Avenue in Spruce Pine.

'Ask and you shall receive'

Local man giving away groceries

By BRANDON ROBERTS
Editor

SPRUCE PINE – Common sense has made a local man spend the past seven Wednesdays sitting next to the road giving away groceries.

"I was driving by a store and saw them throw away about 20 boxes of food," said Thom Hedman, of Spruce Pine. "When I saw that it took me about a minute to think, 'That's not smart.'"

He had read more than a few articles about food insecurity and famine in the area and across the country, so he did the only logical thing.

"I went to the store the next day and I told them it bothered me and asked if I could have it," he said. "It took them even less time to say yes than it did for me to ask."

Since then Hedman has sat from 2:30-6:30 p.m. every Wednesday in the lot across from the Pizza Shop on Oak Avenue in a fold-out chair with the doors to the back of his van open and boxes of

food arranged in a square. Two small, handmade signs simply read, "Free Groceries. Help Yourself."

"The reception has been phenomenal so far," Hedman said. "I see the some of the same people every week. And although some take advantage of what I'm doing, I know most of the people who stop here have a real need."

Aside from tending to his free grocery operation, Hedman can be seen Thursdays on the corner of Summit and Highland avenues "standing for peace," he said.

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ONLINE POLL

Are you opposed to Mission Health moving Spruce Pine's labor and delivery services to Marion?
Answer at
www.mitchellnews.com

LAST WEEK'S POLL
Do you plan to travel more or less this coming summer?



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