



College football

CJ Donaldson enters transfer portal

Page B-1



DOMINIONPOST.COM

SERVING NORTH-CENTRAL WEST VIRGINIA SINCE 1864

\$2.00

Friday
Dec. 20, 2024



High
42
Low
28
Complete forecast
Page A-10

Sponsored by



OBITUARIES

PAGE A-3

Lobb, James
Thornton, Andrea

GOVERNMENT

Martin in as Senate Majority Leader, Takubo out

BY STEVEN ALLEN ADAMS
Staff Reporter

CHARLESTON — The West Virginia Senate Republican caucus' nominee to be the next senate president next month announced a change in who will be the Senate's majority leader, while the current chairman of the powerful Senate Finance Committee will not remain in the role.

In a statement Thursday, state Senate President-Elect Randy Smith, R-Tucker, announced that Senate Economic Development Committee Vice Chairman Patrick Martin, R-Lewis, will become the next Senate Majority Leader after the Legislature gavel in on Wednesday, Jan. 8, to elect new Senate and House of Delegates leadership.

"Patrick is a bright and talented individual. I have said for a while that he is the hidden gem in our chamber and everyone is about to find out how gifted this young man is," Smith said. "I have full confidence that he will no doubt be one of the most effective Majority Leaders in our state's history."

Martin, a businessman, was first elected to the House of Delegates in 2016 and 2018. He was elected to a four-year term in the Senate in 2020 representing the 12th Senatorial District, which includes Lewis, Harrison, Braxton, and Clay counties.

The district has since been redrawn to include Lewis, Harrison, Gilmer, Calhoun counties, and part of Taylor County. Martin was unopposed in both the May Republican primary and the November general election. When Martin — who turns 32 on May 1 — takes the position of Senate Majority Leader next month, he will be the youngest person to hold that position.

"I am honored to serve under Randy Smith as he becomes Senate President and excited to work alongside all my colleagues in the Senate," Martin stated. "Randy is a Godly man whose dedication to faith, SEE LEADER, A-2

UPDATE

Westover bank robber identified, cold case suspect extradited

BY BEN CONLEY

BConley@DominionPost.com

A former Morgantown resident is wanted in connection with the October robbery of the Commerce Drive WesBanco Bank location in Westover.

Westover Police Deputy Chief Scott Carl said the WPD received positive identification

of the man a little over two weeks ago.

"As we were drafting warrants, we discovered he'd robbed another bank, in Ohio. So, we have warrants for the suspect and he's also currently wanted in Ohio," Carl said. "We're working with that department and the FBI and the

U.S. Marshals to get him picked up and arrested."

Carl said law enforcement is currently not sharing the man's identity.

"After the positive ID, we also found that he's wanted in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia and South Carolina on other fraudulent scheme charges, not

bank robbery, but other property crimes," he said. "So, he's wanted in at least six states now and that's why the U.S. Marshals are actively looking for him right now."

According to Carl, the man is "from all over," but is believed to have lived in Morgantown SEE ROBBER, A-2

Meet the minis



Photo by Ron Rittenhouse

On Eagles' Wings' littliest horses brought big smiles to Mon Health System on Thursday. The therapeutic horsemanship outfit made a visit to the hospital to walk through several departments and share some joy. Here, Madison Tomana with the X-ray department (from left), horse owner Nancy Hickman, Tabitha Koerner with the X-ray department and horse owner Robert Hickman stop in the lobby to say hello. On Eagles' Wings' MiniWings program focuses on spreading awareness of the benefits of equine-assisted activities and therapies in the community through the use of their miniature horses Stormy, Toby and Blue. For more information about On Eagles' Wings and its offerings, go to oneagleswingswv.org.

COLLEGE

Tech innovator and WVU grad Kumbhani to receive honorary degree this Saturday

BY JIM BISSETT

JBissett@DominionPost.com

Give me just one semester — and I'll do the rest.

That was the deal Nitin "Nick" Kumbhani made with his dad as a 17-year-old back home in Mumbai, India, in the late 1960s.

All he knew was that he wanted to come to the U.S. for college.

All the elder Kumbhani knew was that while he valued educa-



Nitin "Nick" Kumbhani

Submitted photo

"My father just didn't have the resources, but he still agreed to pay for that one semester."

And Nitin Kumbhani, his fourth child, who is receiving an honorary degree Saturday at WVU's December Commencement, made good on his word.

Kumbhani, who holds an undergraduate degree in electrical engineering and a master's in computer science from the school in Mor-

gantown, credits his father for instilling the work ethic that helped him forge a name in the business software world.

It all started with the 4 p.m.-midnight shift at a wire manufacturing plant in northern New Jersey.

He had taken that one-semester leap and enrolled at the Stevens Institute of Technology in Hoboken, where he was an engineering major.

"I needed to make money. The school was terribly expensive."

The student took classes through the afternoon, finishing up just in time to clock in at the factory.

Then, immediately after clocking out, he would hit the books in his one-room apartment. It didn't long for his alarm clock to sound, so he could do it all again.

SEE DEGREE, A-2



6 16891 01100 3

INSIDE

LOCAL A-5 | OBITUARIES A-3 | OPINION A-4 | CROSSWORDS B-10 | COMICS B-10 | SPORTS B-1 |

HOME DELIVERY: 304-292-6301 | CLASSIFIED: 304-291-9420 | NEWS TIP: 304-291-9425 | SPORTS: 304-291-9410

APPLICATION

Lake Lynn dam project ready for environmental review

FERC accepting comments

BY DAVID BEARD

DBeard@DominionPost.com

Lake Lynn Generation's hydroelectric project application is ready for environmental analysis, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission announced Thursday, and FERC is soliciting comments and recommendations.

Lake Lynn's prior license was issued on Dec. 27, 1994, and expired Nov. 30. FERC on Wednesday issued an annual license to allow Lake Lynn to continue operating while FERC processes its license new application.

The annual license is valid from Dec. 1-Nov. 30, 2025, or until a new project license is issued. If a new license isn't issued the annual license will be renewed automatically without further order or notice.

There is a 60-day win-

dow for comments, Feb. 17, 2025, with a window for reply comments stretching an additional 45 days, April 3, 2025.

FERC said it strongly encourages electronic filing. They can be submitted via FERC's eFiling system at <https://ferconline.ferc.gov/ferconline.aspx>.

Commenters can submit brief comments up to 6,000 characters, without prior registration, using the eComment system at <https://ferconline.ferc.gov/QuickComment.aspx>.

In lieu of electronic filing, you may submit a paper copy. Submissions sent via the U.S. Postal Service must be addressed to: Debbie-Anne A. Reese, Secretary, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First Street NE, Room 1A, Washington, DC 20426. Submissions sent via any

other carrier must be addressed to: Debbie-Anne A. Reese, Secretary, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 12225 Wilkins Avenue, Rockville, MD 20852.

All filings must clearly identify the project name and docket number on the first page: Lake Lynn Hydroelectric Project (P2459-279).

Project facts

The Lake Lynn project includes a 13-mile long, 1,729-acre impoundment called Cheat Lake (originally named Lake Lynn); a 1,000-foot-long, 125-foot-high concrete dam; and a 160-foot-long powerhouse containing four generators with a total capacity of 51.2 megawatts.

The project operates as a peaking facility with storage. Winter peak demand usually occurs for five hours in the morning and five hours in the afternoon. Summer peak demand occurs from 6-11 p.m.

As part of the new license, Lake Lynn will develop a number of plans, including an operations plan, a water quality monitoring plan, a recreation management plan, a shoreline management plan, and a historic properties management plan, as well as bat protection measures.

Lake Lynn also proposes to remove 243.8 acres of project land no longer needed for project purposes from its project boundary.

... VIA FERC'S
EFILING SYSTEM
AT [HTTPS://
FERCONLINE.FERC.
GOV/FERCONLINE.
ASPX](https://ferconline.ferc.gov/ferconline.aspx).

LOCAL BRIEFS

DPNews@DominionPost.com

Bishop Cowden to visit St. Thomas a Becket

On Sunday, the Right Rev. Matthew Cowden, Bishop of West Virginia, will visit St. Thomas a Becket Episcopal Church at 75 Old Cheat Road in Morgantown. Bishop Matthew will preach and preside over worship at 8 a.m. and 10:30 a.m., teach a special adult class at 9 a.m., confirm four youth and six adults, and receive a public reaffirmation of faith from three people. A celebratory reception will follow the 10:30 a.m. Eucharist, with the Greening of the Church afterwards.

MUB announces holiday hours

In celebration of the holiday season, Morgantown Utility Board will close at noon Dec. 24 and remain closed Dec. 25 and Dec. 26. Offices will reopen Dec. 27. MUB offices will also close at 2 p.m. on Dec. 31 and remain closed Jan. 1. The office will resume normal business hours Jan. 2.

Customers experiencing an emergency can call MUB at 304-292-8443. Emergency assistance will remain available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.



Photo Courtesy/WV Legislative Photography

State Senate Economic Development Committee Vice Chairman Patrick Martin will become the youngest Senate Majority Leader in state history next year.

LEADER

FROM PAGE A-1

family, and the people of West Virginia sets a strong example for us all. As the youngest Majority Leader in West Virginia Senate history, I'm eager to bring fresh energy to our work and help guide our state toward a brighter future."

Smith, a retired coal miner who spent much of the final years of his career in mine safety, was elected by the Senate Republican caucus on Dec. 8. He was first elected to the Senate in 2016 and currently serves as chairman of the Senate Energy, Industry and Mining Committee. Smith was a two-term member of the House of Delegates first elected in 2012, where he served as an assistant House majority whip after Republicans took the majority in the House in 2015.

"I am deeply honored and humbled to have been chosen as the Senate President for West Virginia," Smith said. "As I begin the transition into leadership, I am committed to working tirelessly on behalf of all our citizens to advance policies that will improve our state and ensure a prosperous future for generations to come."

Smith succeeds current Senate President Craig Blair, R-Berkeley, who lost reelection in the May GOP primary. Martin will succeed current Senate Majority Leader Tom Takubo, R-Kanawha, who was a candidate for the caucus' nominee for senate president. Takubo was defeated by Smith on the second ballot.

Both Smith and Takubo came out ahead of Senate Finance Committee Chairman Eric Tarr, R-Putnam, on the first ballot for senate president. Speaking Wednesday on the Dave Allen Show on the WCHS Radio Network in Charleston, Tarr said he was offered the opportunity to remain Senate Finance Committee chairman next year but declined.

"Yes, I have been asked and yes, I have declined," Tarr said. "The relationship between the Senate President and the finance chair, to operate it like I operated it as finance chair, requires absolute trust...What you can't do as finance chair, at least from my perspective, is be worried about the senate president cutting your knees out or for not understanding or not being involved in the discussion at a very high level and have the trust that what you're doing is in the best interests of the state."

In his statement, Smith said he would use the remaining weeks between now and Jan. 8 building out the remainder of his leadership team and committee chairs. But he hopes the Senate Republican caucus can go into the next 60-day legislative session in February united.

"Now is the time for unity and collaboration," Smith said. "Together, we can address the challenges facing our state and build a stronger, more vibrant West Virginia."

Steven Allen Adams can be reached at sadams@newsandsentinel.com

ROBBER

FROM PAGE A-1

for about six years, primarily in the area of Richmond Avenue and Willey Street.

"We actually found out he's a suspect in a case in Morgantown, and they really weren't sure who he was until we figured this out," he said.

According to the initial press release, a white man, approximately 40 to 50 years old, entered the bank at about 1:30 p.m. on Oct. 23 and handed the teller a threatening note demanding money.

Westover Police Chief Joe Adams previously said he believes the man

made off with about \$3,000 before driving away in what looked to be a blue Buick LeSabre.

In other law enforcement news out of Westover, a man wanted in connection with a 24-year-old sexual assault cold case is back in West Virginia. Carl said two WPD officers traveled to Connecticut earlier this month to bring Tyrone Jermaine Walker back to West Virginia on an extradition warrant.

On May 23, 2000, a victim reported a sexual assault to the Westover Police Department, but investigators were not able to locate or identify the assailant.

Carl said the victim had been out with a friend and the suspect that evening before returning to a Westover apartment.

Forensic evidence in the case was processed as part of the West Virginia Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (SAKI) and the suspected offender's DNA was entered into the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS).

Just over 20 years later, the West Virginia Crime Laboratory connected the sample to Walker, whose DNA profile had been entered into the California State DNA Database and, it turns out, was also linked to a sexual assault case in Montana.

On June 30, 2023, the Monongalia County Magistrate Court issued an arrest warrant for Walker.

This past July, members of the U.S. Marshals Violent Fugitive Task Force tracked Walker to a residence in Waterbury, Conn., where he was arrested.

Walker is currently being held in the North Central Regional Jail.

"We've had several big cases that have culminated in the last week or two and we've been really busy wrapping those up and trying to get those settled and those people in jail, where they belong," Carl said.

DEGREE

FROM PAGE A-1

Even with all that work, he still knew he wasn't going to be able to afford another semester on his own.

"I had to find a school where the tuition was cheaper," he said.

Let's go ...

As it turned out, that happened to be WVU. Which, as Kumbhani happily discovered, was Almost Heaven for tech innovators in training.

In Morgantown, he worked with Addison Fischer, a math major

and pioneering tech advancer whom Kumbhani still says is "Bill Gates brilliant," after all these years.

Kumbhani took lead roles in the development of billing systems and networks that are being used today, in various fashion, by the school in Morgantown.

"I'm proud of that," he said, he said of those FORTNAN, large mainframe days. "We realized we were on to something."

That included work on then-new automatic teller machines for banking, which is how he end-

ed up in Dayton, Ohio, the home of NCR Corp., which had taken the lead in the technology.

In Dayton, where he still lives, he decided he wanted to soar on his own.

He sold the company he founded, Data Systems, which added even more innovations to the ATM technology, to a Fortune 500 firm. His second, Apex Capital Management, forged new trails in finance, his second professional love.

Today, at the age of 76, he is still active as a consultant.

"When I'm carried out," he said, chuckling. "That's the day I stop working."

Morgantown days

In the meantime, he's looking forward to this weekend when the country roads carry him back home for the 2 p.m. ceremonies at the WVU Coliseum.

Graduates from the

Davis College of Agricultural and National Resources and the Benjamin E. Statler College of Engineering and Natural Resources will go forth that afternoon.

So will seniors from John Chambers College of Business and Economics.

And from the schools of Dentistry, Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy and Public Health, also.

All these semesters later, Kumbhani is looking forward to programming his trip back to the University City for the Saturday event.

He may even pay a visit to Gene's Beer Garden, one his favorite places to unwind during his nine years here.

"I fell in love with Morgantown and WVU," he said.

"The people, the scenery, the intellectual community ... it's a very special place."

MAKE YOUR MONEY MAKE MORE MONEY.

4.47% APY

Ask an MVB Team Member about opening a 10-Month CD account.

* Annual percentage yield (APY) current as of 1/20/2024. Minimum balance of \$1,000.00 is required to obtain the advertised APY. Maximum deposit for the CD is \$250,000. CD Special Interest rates apply only to the initial CD term. Accounts must be opened in person at an MVB Bank location in West Virginia or Northern Virginia. At maturity the 10-month CD will automatically renew at a 10-month CD term and the Automatic CD Renewal will be in effect at time of renewal. Fees could reduce earnings on the account. No Broken CDs. A penalty may be imposed for early withdrawal. The advertised APY is an estimate and is subject to change without notice. Promotion valid beginning 1/20/2024 and subject to withdrawal at any time.

MVB FDC **1-888-356-3996 | mvbanking.com**

START THE NEW YEAR WITH A KICK! LEARN HAPKIDO!

Recognized as one of the **TOP 10** Schools in the U.S. for Self Defense!

Try Our **INTRODUCTORY PROGRAM: 10 LESSONS for \$99**

Includes uniform!

Men, Women & Children WELCOME!

JOHN BELLISCHIAN
AMERICAN
JUDO - HAPKIDO INST.

3001 Northpointe Plaza • Easton Hill
304-296-5111 • www.judo-hapkido.com

CONTACT

Newsroom: 304-291-9425
Classified: 304-291-9420
8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays
Circulation: 304-292-6301
7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. weekdays

USPS 156680

VOL. 61 NO. 156

The Dominion Post is published daily and Sunday at the Greer Building, Morgantown, WV 26505. Periodicals postage paid at Morgantown, WV. Single Copy \$2.00 and \$3.00 outside. Home Delivery \$5.00 per week.

CLARIFY

The Dominion Post strives to publish accurate information. If a factual error does occur, notify Managing Editor Katie McDowell by emailing editor@dominionpost.com

Dominion Post.com

Wesley United Methodist Church
Corner of Willey & High Streets • Downtown Morgantown
304-292-9465 • www.wesleymorgantown.org

Blue Christmas Service
Saturday, December 21st 5:00 p.m.

Christmas Eve Services
Tuesday, December 24th
Children's Service 5:30 p.m.
Candlelight & Communion 7:00 p.m.

Service of Carols & Cookies
Sunday, December 29th 10:30 a.m.
Outdoor Worship with Wesley at Hazel Ruby McQuinn Amphitheatre (Depot area)
Christmas caroling and cookies for all!