

THE NASHVILLE GRAPHIC

Nash County's First Newspaper Since 1895 – SPECIAL SECTION, JANUARY 29, 2026

2025 YEAR IN REVIEW



DECEMBER – President Donald Trump visits Rocky Mount. During his rally, he invites Heather Whitley on stage noting she was “a bartender and server in Nashville,” who would benefit from no tax on tips. Graphic photo



SEPTEMBER – A ribbon-cutting is held to celebrate the opening of Nashville Fire Station #2, 1520 Oak Level Road. Among the speakers were U.S. Congressman Don Davis and both state and federal USDA representatives. The USDA invested \$1.6 million to help with firehouse construction through its Rural Development program. Graphic photo



NOVEMBER – Masonic Morningstar Lodge #85 celebrated its milestone 200th anniversary making it the oldest continually operating institution in the town since its charter in 1825. A group of about 50, including multiple past masters, gathered for a sit-down dinner and cake while addresses were given by organization officials, including Steve Lord, Lodge Master; Carl Smith, District Deputy Grand Master; and Donald Street, a past Lodge Master, who gave a colorful history of the Lodge. Graphic photo



Johnny Barnes, President of Barnes Farming Corporation, passed away Saturday, July 12, following complications from an illness. Barnes, 61, recognized as a forward-thinking innovator within the state's agribusiness community, dedicated his life to advancing the sweetpotato industry. Barnes Farming Corporation became one of the largest sweetpotato producers in the United States.



Red Oak native and longtime Agriculture advocate Bobby Jo Fisher was honored with the top award from the North Carolina Department of Agriculture, “The Ambassador of Agriculture,” during the second annual Agriculture Forum Jan. 29 at Nash Community College. Fisher was presented a plaque by Steve Troxler, North Carolina Agriculture Commissioner, for his “lifelong, lasting commitment” to Nash County, to regional agriculture, and service as Chairman of the Nash County Soil & Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors. Fisher passed away August 24 at the age of 90. Known as the “Father of the annual Catfish Luncheon,” a hugely-popular venue conducted by Nash County Soil and Water, he was universally well-liked and admired for his volunteerism to all causes Agriculture, particularly 4-H, and for his genial personality. Fisher, named Outstanding Young Farmer of Nash County in 1969, was a demonstrated leader in multiple farming organizations, including the American Soybeans Association, the NC Soybean Producer Association, NC Cattlemen's Association, NC Angus Association, North Carolina Forage and Grasslands, among others. He received the state's highest civilian honor, the Order of the Long leaf Pine in 2018 at the age of 84. Graphic photo

CLIPS FROM 2025



A man and a woman were killed in August during a flash flooding in the area of 687 North NC-581, Spring Hope. Both victims were from Louisburg, 55-year-old Raymond Evans Jr. and 24-year-old Lottie Alston. Spring Hope Spring Hope officer Lt. Jason Leary (pictured left) was hailed as a hero for his life saving attempts. Both victims were deceased when found. Contributed photos

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2025
YEAR IN REVIEW

JANUARY

Longtime Momeyer Ruritan Club member and town Mayor Kenneth Parker passed away on January 26. Parker also contributed to his town by being an active member of the Momeyer Fire Department, serving as Assistant Chief and volunteering as an EMT for many years. Parker was also a member of the Mt. Zion Freewill Baptist Church, where he worked as Deacon, Sunday School Superintendent and Building Committee Chair.



A request to rezone two Cooke Road properties in Nashville was tabled pending additional review after multiple objections from Cooke Road residents and the revelation that some nearby residents did not receive letters from the town about the proposed rezoning.

Braswell Family Farms hosted its second annual New Year's Eve Egg Drop on Dec. 31st at the Nashville Junction venue in Nashville. Approximately 4,000 people visited the event which featured live entertainment, food, activities and fireworks.

After eight months of talking with Nash Senior Center staff and seniors about building expansion, county leaders have approved conceptual plans and authorized project architects to continue with design specification plans. Under design is a new, one-story connected building on county-owned adjacent property measuring another 7,310 square feet.

Spring Hope's signature event for over 50 years, the Pumpkin Festival, has been uprooted; the Chamber of Commerce has announced that it will be ending its stewardship of the event, but town leaders are hoping that new volunteers step up to run it. Chamber members listed rising costs, limited volunteer participation and declining support

from sponsors and local partners as their reasons for stepping back.

A Nash County advisory board says North Carolina is remiss in not raising its minimum tobacco sales age to 21 to match federal law, and is looking for legislators willing to take up the cause to get state law changed. The Nash County Human Services Board adopted a resolution Dec. 31, 2024, stating that NC needs to protect Nash County children from vaping and nicotine addiction by raising the minimum age of tobacco product sales and restore local authority to regulate sales.

Red Oak's historic log cabin has been the topic of closed session discussion by the Red Oak town council, who authorized Mayor level Langley afterwards in the Jan. 13 re-opened session "to reach out to companies that move log cabins." No other information was given.

Less than 10 months before his scheduled release from prison, a 43-year-old habitual felon died at Nash Correctional Institution, apparently from suicide. Timothy Wayne Beaver was found unresponsive in his cell around 7 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 21. Despite the efforts of prison medical staff and paramedics, Beaver died at the scene.

American Legion Post 91 is asking the town of Spring Hope to give permission for them to renovate the old Boy Scout Hut on McLean Street, in hopes they can use it for meetings and to bring back a Scouting program.

Nash commissioners authorize hiring off-duty sheriffs deputies to help out at the detention center, following three attacks on detention officers in three weeks.

Spring Hope looks at developing a new comprehensive land use plan due to residential growth.

Spring Hope passes new ordinance requiring developers to pay a recreation facility fee or set aside neighborhood park and open space for the

purpose of recreation.

Nash County Public Schools gives an update on the purchase of land for the new Southern Nash Middle School. Price negotiations are underway for the desired land parcel, located in the area of Highway 97 and Highway 581.

A preliminary site plan on the as yet unpurchased land eyed for the new Southern Nash Middle School has been approved by DOT, who weighed in on entrance and exit routes for the school.

An ordinance change in the town of Nashville is permitting two advisory boards to be combined as one. Tree board members will now be the same members as the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources advisory board.

The first meeting of 2025 for the Downtown Nashville Strong Advisory Board (DNSAB) was a bumpy one for its newest members present, as board members came out swinging at town planner Shawn Lucas and the Nashville town council and asking for a joint meeting.

At issue are recent town council decisions on DNSAB appointments, the purchase of Christmas decorations, and the use of Municipal Service District (MSD) money to pay for the repair of a fence railing near merchant stores on W. Washington Street.

Downtown Strong members present voted unanimously to request a face-to-face meeting with the town council at the next Downtown Strong meeting on Feb. 24.

Less than five months after appointing a new finance director, Nash County posts the job again and appoints the former assistant finance director to the position, but under a different title.



Nashville Fire Department Chief Chris Joyner presents Haywood Edwards with a plaque for his 40 years of service. During the town meeting, Jason Edwards, Assistant Chief, spoke about deploying men to western NC in October of 2024 to assist in an NC Emergency Management. NFD sent a four-man team to Hot Springs for a week, where they worked in "not very good living conditions," according to Chris Joyner, Public Safety Director. Battalion Chief Lee Coppedge, Fire Engineer Wyatt Wood, Fire Engineer Thomas Mosely and Senior Firefighter Benjamin Woodlief worked alongside another team from Mount Holly FD, Gaston County, to assist emergency management teams from Lenoir County. Also recognized were firefighters who worked extra shifts to cover while the men were gone, two NFD members who got their Associate Degrees from NCC and several recognized for years of service, including Haywood Edwards, who received a plaque for 40 years. Graphic photo

2025 YEAR IN REVIEW

FEBRUARY

For the second time in two months, the Nashville town council has voted to table a decision on rezoning two chunks of land off Cooke Road in the light of heavy local opposition. A proposed food processing and educational complex for Ripe Revival draws criticism for its proposed list of land improvements, which include an outdoor amphitheater, manufacturing assembly processing, a microbrewery, farmers' market.

A Sandy Cross grandmother receives life in prison after entering an Alford plea in Nash County. Patricia Ann Ricks, 72, was charged with first degree murder in the Feb. 7, 2023 death of her 8-year-old granddaughter, Christal Neveah Lane. Ricks, appearing Jan. 31 in Nash County Superior Court, entered a "no contest" Alford plea, which allowed her to bypass a trial and go straight to sentencing.

UNC Nash is approved for rezoning 7 acres near the 64 interchange from A-1 Agriculture to B-1, business. Plans are for a 10,000 square-foot medical offices building to be put there, with eight total primary care providers and a potential future extension to offer urgent care.

A rezoning request for a new, 72-lot subdivision on Peachtree Hills Road, Spring Hope, was turned down by Nash commissioners.

A resolution discouraging the release of helium balloons in Nash County is passed.

Momeyer town officials invite the public to submit designs for a town seal.

The Momeyer town council votes to begin airing videos of town council and planning board meetings on YouTube beginning in March despite objections by planning board members. Curby Key wrote a letter to the town council in which he threatened to quit if videotaping meetings were to be done, while five other planners signed a group letter stating that they did not believe videotaping was nec-

essary. The council voted 3-1, with Edward Jackson casting the lone 'no' vote, to institute videotaping for a trial 6-month period, to be revisited and assessed after that.

A new, 72-unit apartment complex at Southside Drive, Nashville is approved by the Nashville Planning Board.

Building improvements at 125 and 127 W. Washington Street, the old Nashville Furniture store, were recommended to receive façade grants by the Downtown Strong Advisory Board. Hyde will have to have a certificate of occupancy before being eligible to receive up to \$5,000 in grant money for improvements made to each building.

Swift Creek Elementary school was sold, with a closing bid of \$250,000 accepted by Nash County Public Schools. CLMM Inc. of Nashville, with its registered agent Christopher Hilliard of Sykes Road, Nashville, submitted the winning bid.

Nash firefighters now have a valuable tool that could help save farmer lives, thanks to a gift of a 'Great Wall of Rescue' kit made at the Feb. 6 meeting of the Nash County Farm Bureau. Presented by Brandon Moore and Greg Bunn, Vice-President and President of the Nash County NC Farm Bureau Board of Directors, the kit is designed to be used in grain entrapment rescue scenarios. It was accepted by Chris Joyner, Nashville Public Safety Director, along with Chase Bass, Momeyer Fire Chief, on behalf of county fire departments.

The first K-9 officer ever to join the ranks of the Nashville Police Department, Renzo, has officially been retired from the force and has been purchased from the town in order to live out his retirement years with his handler's family. Renzo was purchased from the town and given to his handler, Officer Grant Stallings.

Spring Hope's board of commissioners has approved a development agreement with Bryson's Ridge,

planned as a 200-plus single-family unit multiphase subdivision on 68 acres on NC 581 North.

The Red Oak Community Building, also known as the Red Oak Log Cabin, will be allowed to stay where it is for now, but the question of moving it has arisen during more than one closed session of the town council. A motion was made in open session Feb.10 to "put the relocation of the cabin on pause at this time but to move forward with making necessary repairs to the building." Mayor Levell Langley said relocation had been discussed because of limited parking space. Repairs planned are a new handicap ramp along with pressure washing and re-staining.

A rezoning request by Williams Builders of Rocky Mount to upzone 4.47 acres off NC Highway 97 to the county's most intensive zoning district- G1 (general industrial) has failed at the Nash Planning board level but may yet come before commissioners at their March 10 meeting. Planners voted unanimously to deny a rezoning recommendation, stating that the scope of permissible land uses under G1 was too broad, considering the proximity of a residential district across the street.

A vacant lot at 303 S. Pine Street, Spring Hope, formerly the site of JHRG Manufacturing, has been rezoned from Light Industrial to R8, residential, at the request of neighbors. Residents Pam Brantley and Rocio Boyles pointed out that the subject property backs up to 581 S. Walnut Street, which is all residential. Spring Hope's board of commissioners voted in favor of rezoning Feb. 3 following a recommendation in favor of rezoning from the planning board.

Southern Nash Middle School's (SNMS) Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) team showcased groundbreaking innovation and teamwork at the Statewide Future Cities Competition in Raleigh, earning the Jacob's Core



Nash County's only high school dance team, Nash Central's Dancentral Dance Team, showed up and showed out to compete for the first time at the Universal Dance Association National Dance Team Championship, ending up placing 11th in their division among over 300 teams. The competition took place over three days, with the local team competing in the Varsity Intermediate Hip Hop division. Kelly Scott is the Dance Teacher and Dance Team Director at Nash Central High School. Contributed photo

Values Award from Jacobs Engineering and the Best Use of Construction Materials Award from Carolinas AGC.

After a joint session Feb.24, Nashville's Downtown Strong Advisory Board (DSAB) and the Nashville Town Council have generally buried the hatchet and settled on a plan for improved communications and regular sit-down meetings in the future. Both boards also agreed to change future DSAB application requirements by stating that a preference would be given to downtown business or property owners, with the possibility of having one position in an "at large" capacity. DSAB members asked for the session Jan. 27 after voicing complaints that council members had overridden or changed their 2024 recommendations regarding the appointment of new DSAB members and the purchase of Christmas lights.

February 2025 marked the 21st Anniversary of the CIAA (Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association)

Scholarship Competition, with a conference queen and king to be crowned and presented with \$2,500 scholarships March 1st at the Baltimore Convention Center. What many people may not know is that the Mister & Miss CIAA competition started in the mind of a Nash County woman, Dottie Cannon, who came up with the idea while a fashion show model herself in 2003, convincing CIAA commissioners to bring the new event about in 2004. Cannon was recognized last year during a ceremony at the March 2024 CIAA Basketball Tournament in Baltimore, MD, receiving a cut glass award inscribed with her name as Founder, Miss CIAA.

2025 YEAR IN REVIEW

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MARCH



Nashville Police Lieutenant Caleb Shockley was appointed Police Chief.

The developer for a new 72-unit apartment complex off Southside Drive agrees to pay to widen Southside Drive and post a road improvement bond in the event of road damage during construction. A rezoning request was approved for 11 acres off Southside Drive “The Reserve at Hillside Pointe.”

Spring Hope’s Museum was chosen as one of four in the state this year to participate in a “travelling archivist program,” with the goals of document preservation and instruction on how to improve museum functions.

A ‘Pumpkin Festival Rally’ was held at the Spring Hope town council chambers producing 27 volunteer sign-ups and direction to a webpage for those interested in working on specific festival committees.

The man arrested for attempted murder in the 2021 shooting of Nash County Sheriff’s Deputy William Toney was found guilty on four counts in a Nash superior court jury trial. Jarred Ford of St. Petersburg, Florida, was sentenced to three jail sentences, the longest being 17-21 years, for a shootout involving two Nash County Sheriff’s Deputies during a traffic stop on I-95.

Jeannette Pittman, a former Nash educator and current member of the Nash County Health and Human Services Board was awarded the Order of the Long Leaf Pine.

The Town of Momeyer launches its You Tube channel for public meetings.

Nash commissioners passed a resolution to ask that a historical marker be placed at the site of the 1949 school bus accident in the Murraytown area which resulted in the deaths of seven children

Well-known veterinarians were put out of their Red Oak home after a lightning strike caught their house on fire. The Loop Road home of Drs. Cole Younger and Kim Logner, who operate Full Service Mobile Veterinary services for large animal care, caught fire at night while no one was home.

Nashville council members table renewing Glover Park interlocal agreement with Nash County until some details can be worked out about the upcoming new Splash Pad, expected in 2026.

An innovative joint partnership designed to streamline emergency response services to local schools - the Safeguard Task Force - is now in the works at the Nash County Sheriff’s Office.

Developers of the Cardinal Woods subdivision, located off Glover Park Memorial Drive, got final design plans approved for phases two and three of construction, with a planned total of housing units estimated at 246.

What started out as a routine rezoning request about the planned expansion of the Nash County Senior Center unearthed what could be an unexpected complication: the possible presence of a small family graveyard on the site. Ross Strickland, Nashville planning board member, said he believes there may be up to four unmarked graves at the northeast corner of the property. Adam Tyson,



Maryam Brown of Rocky Mount (right), a 17-year-old senior at Rocky Mount Preparatory, was selected as Boys & Girls Clubs’ Youth of the Year while Carisma Deans (left) of Nashville, a 16-year-old junior at Nash-Rocky Mount Early College, was runner-up. Jeremiah Sellers of Tarboro, who attends Tarboro High, was the third-place winner. Deans congratulates Brown (right) who scored one point higher than Deans to win the title. Graphic file photo



Castalia Fire Department's newest engine, Engine 7, a Spartan FC-94 Custom Pumper from Atlantic Coast Fire Trucks, was officially been pushed-in. It was ceremonially put into service during a celebratory event Sunday, March 30. Engine 7, also called “the Main Station Express,” replaced Truck 75, a 20-year-old pumper tanker, which contributed some of its equipment to be transferred to the new truck. Graphic file photo



Momeyer Family Day was held at the Momeyer Ruritan Club with an estimated 120-140 people attending enjoying live music, cotton candy, popcorn and an exhibition of Momeyer historical items. Graphic file photo

Nash County Planning Director, said the county would be open to investigating the site prior to proceeding with any construction.

New Blooming Festival prohibitions involving dogs, guns and face masks have were adopted as a Nashville town ordinance, based on requests by the Nashville Chamber and Nashville Police Department. Dogs are not allowed at the festival, nor are face masks other than medical masks, and the new ordinance will allow the NPD to enforce those rules. A third new gun-related ordinance applies to Nashville year-round, prohibiting weapons possession while intoxicated.

A new, 18-lot subdivision near Spring Hope at the intersection of Peachtree Hills Road and Savage Road was approved by county planners, with the next step preparation of plats for review. LD Land Holdings LLC, the Cary-based owner of 129 acres near the Franklin County line on both sides of Peachtree Hills Road and along the south side of Savage Road, put in a request to subdivide the large parcel to break off a 27.5 acre section for what is being termed “Peachtree Hills Road, Phase 1.”

Nashville’s Downtown Strong Advisory Board (DSAB) looks at a focus on green spaces with benches and planters, adding trash can and repairing sidewalks

Nash County Ruritans held their 65th annual meeting at the Momeyer Ruritan Club, with 70 people attending from six area clubs.

Nash Arts steps in to act as the fiscal sponsor of Spring Hope’s Pumpkin Festival since the new event organizers are not yet incorporated as a 501 c 3 non-profit group, and thereby unable to apply for or receive grant funds.

Nash County 4-H celebrated the achievements of youth and volunteers at the annual 4-H Achievement awards program. The Sew What 4-H Club was named Club of the Year while Jane Tyson, the club’s leader, was named 4-H Volunteer of the Year. Senior 4-H’er of the Year was named as Page Strickland, and Junior 4-H’er of the Year was Corbin Clark. Among other award winners were Liana Vandermark, Family and Consumer Science Award; Riley Proctor, 4-H Agriculture award; Taryn Reams, Red Hat Outstanding 4-H’er award; Ella Griffin, 4-H Leadership of Excellence Award; and the Bridles and Halters 4-H club for the Scrapbook award.

A pilot program for Flag Football is planned to begin this fall at four Nash County high schools: Northern Nash, Southern Nash, Nash Central and Rocky Mount High School.

APRIL



Shawn Holland (right) was named the 2025 Distinguished Citizen at the Nashville Chamber of Commerce’s 33rd Annual Distinguished Citizen Awards Ceremony. Graphic file photo



Page Strickland (right) received the Junior Achievement Award at the Nashville Chamber of Commerce’s 33rd Annual Distinguished Citizen Awards Ceremony. Graphic file photo

Spring Hope leaders wait for better cost estimates as the town is one of several southern Nash County towns listed as potential users of proposed regional wastewater plant, which would also handle wastewater disposal for Bailey, Middlesex, and the Middlesex Corporate Centre. The country is considering construction of a 1.9 million gallon per day plant to be located on NC 581 north of Nash Middle School.

A special “in season” Little League tournament, “the Spring Hope Sandlot Showdown,” is planned April 12 at the Community Park at 401 McLean Street. Sponsored by the Spring Hope Chamber of Commerce, the first-ever invitational event will involve competition by six teams of 7-8 year old participants in the Nash County league.

Two million dollars in Nash tourism dollars are headed into City of Rocky Mount coffers to help pay for repairs at the Imperial Centre, which needs roof and window repairs. The money was raised through a two percent hotel/motel tax and has accumulated over the past three years.

Nash County names Nikki Stanton finance director. Stanton was Finance Director for Warren County.

Street drainage problems at Boddie and Railroad Streets have caused water damage four times to one local business owner, who has asked the town to file an insurance claim on his behalf.

The 2025 Eastern Carolina 4-H Livestock Show and Sale was held in Kingsboro. Youth from Nash, Edgecombe and Halifax Counties participated.

Nash County’s one landfill, a disposal site for construction and demolition debris, is expanding, with a \$52,000 change order to cover stormwater erosion and control issues on one active cell. The county’s current contract with the Greensboro-based business, which began Nov. 7, amounts to \$798,942. The work is to be completed by May 5th.

Leaders say Spring Hope’s community building may be too far gone in mold and moisture issues to save, so they are looking into costs for demolition while considering other uses for the land. Andrew Delonno, Town Manager, went over the results of an engineering report recently done on the property, located at 104 Community Street and on the same triangular 0.84-acre parcel of town-owned land occupied by the Spring Hope Historical Museum. Delonno said renovations would cost close to \$1.5 million.

Nash County needs to conserve its farmland, help and recognize its farmers, and needs to do it before Nash ends up like Wake County: those were concerns heard at the fourth Legislative and Elected Officials Appreciation Breakfast. Sponsored by the Nash County Farm Bureau and held inside a neat warehouse belonging to the Leggett Farming Partnership on April 10th, the event drew a large mixed crowd of farmers, cooperative extension agents, FFA students, county commissioners, college and school board leaders, state legislators and Farm Bureau personnel, among others. Keynote speaker Beth Farrell, Agriculture Program Development Coordinator for the NC Department of Agriculture spoke about farmland loss in Wake County, which has lost nearly 20% of its farm and forest land over the last nine years.

One of the state’s oldest family-owned and operated funeral homes is returning to its roots in Nashville, with the announcement coming seven years after fire destroyed the business at 204 N. Alston Street. Richardson Funeral Home, which opened in Nashville in 1918 only to suffer a fire one hundred years later, is “planning to come back in the near future,” according to Tabitha Richardson, who shared the news with the Nashville town council at their April 8 meeting.

In the interests of protecting the town of Momeyer from encroachment by other municipalities, Momeyer town officials are going on record to oppose two current Senate bills that would eliminate ETJs (extra territorial jurisdictions). Will Funderburg, Mayor, told council members at their April 14th meeting about Senate Bill 314 and Senate Bill 493, which eliminate ETJs “to prevent regulatory overlap and streamline land use decisions” or “remove ETJ authority.” Council members approved a motion for Funderburg to draft a letter in opposition to the Senate bills to be sent to Senator Lisa Barnes and Rep. Allen Chesser, asking that they not support the bills.

An armed felon took his own life near a Castalia home Tuesday morning after telling a Nash County



Nashville Parks and Recreation held its annual Eggciting Saturday featuring an egg hunt, the Easter Bunny and activities. Pictured, Noland Glover finds the golden egg during the egg hunt. Graphic photo

Sheriff’s Deputy that he was not going to be taken into custody. Donald Fields, age 40, killed himself with a gunshot to the head on wooded property near 4892 Crabtree Lane, a brick ranch house less than a mile outside of Castalia and not far from the solar farm. His death happened during the course of a high-risk warrant operation conducted by the US Marshals Task Force, aided by the NCSO. Fields, wanted in New York in association with a 2nd degree murder charge, was tracked to the Castalia residence by a US Marshal’s Task Force, which asked for NCSO help to assist with the arrest.

Momeyer town officials are taking a hard look at some non-adherences to code, with a dog kennel, shipping containers and chicken plate sales without permits now falling under the microscope. Representatives from Mid-East Commission met with council members at their April 14 meeting to lay out guidelines for a model ordinance review. Momeyer has not revised or updated its ordinances or zoning since 1987. Part of what’s driving the work is the need to align with state statutes.

The Town of Castalia is ready to present its 25-26 Fiscal Year budget. Commissioners met to receive information on the upcoming budget and to offer input. The end result was a budget around 10 percent less than last year’s budget. The proposed budget is \$225,010 while last year’s proposed budget was \$255,738.29. The proposed budget has salary increases for the five commissioners, the mayor, and the town clerk.

Nash County officials are powering up to produce the 2026 fiscal year budget, meeting April 16th for a budget work session at the MedPark building on the grounds of UNC Nash for more than six hours. Nikki Stanton, Finance Director, pegged the FY26 tax calculation, including both ad valorem and motor vehicles taxes, at about \$69.2 million based on a 97.5% collection rate.

Over 5,000 households in Nash County will be connected to high-speed internet, thanks to part of a \$31 million state award. Governor Josh Stein announced the Completing Access to Broadband (CAB) program project results earlier this month, with Robbie Davis, Nash commissioner, carrying the news to the Red Oak town council April 14. A press release from Governor Stein’s office stated that the \$31 million would pay to connect 10,810 households in 14 counties - and 5,693 are in Nash alone.

Less than three weeks after the annual Nash County Republican party convention, three of the leaders elected as Executive Committee officers, including its Chairman, have resigned. Mark Edwards, re-elected chair to begin his 9th 2-year term, emailed the Executive Committee April 11 to let them know he was stepping down, effective that day. Pam Mullen, re-elected Treasurer, also resigned as did Yvonne McLeod, an at-large executive committee member. Edwards said there had been contention at the party convention from previously unresolved issues.

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MAY

The 3rd annual GoatFest, a sanctioned barbecue cook-off event designed to fundraise for local cancer patients, gets its sizzle on Saturday, May 3rd at 624 Wollett Mill Road, a 23-acre goat farm in Nashville. Jason Knapp, event founder and homeowner at the GoatFest site, said this year's goal is \$12,000, which will allow him to help 160 cancer patients with food gift cards.

The centerpiece to Nashville's oncoming Barn Quilt wall has been designed and painted, with the finishing touches to be added soon after input from the Downtown Nashville Strong Advisory Board (DNSAB).

May is Foster Care Awareness Month, with Nash DSS workers, community partners, foster parents and one elected official gathering in front of the county administration building to share fellowship and tie ribbons to trees, one for each of the 87 Nash County children currently in foster care.

An unexpected opportunity to buy land in two spots adjacent to the town hall was snapped up quickly with council members wasting no time in giving purchase approval. Two parcels of land that abut the rear yards for the town hall and the Barnes Street Police/Fire station will be purchased to be used for future town hall expansion.

The newly re-branded Spring Hope National Pumpkin Festival organizers give an update noting an issue with the parade route, which has not been settled. Two issues that could cause route changes: depot renovation/construction work, and roads closed off because of planned work to replace water mains on US64A, Pine and Walnut Streets.

In conjunction with a town brochure currently in production, a new train-centered logo has been developed by members of Spring Hope's Downtown Development

Board (DDB), and will be presented to town commissioners for their approval. The new design, featuring an off-centered, front-facing old-style steam engine with green highlights in front of a terra-cotta colored background circle, was unveiled at the April 21st DDB meeting.1

Red Oak's 2025-2026 budget includes adding sidewalks and new activities at the Ennis Park pavilion. The budget, which has increased by just over \$20,000 from last year's, totals \$1,268,100.

Nashville annexes three properties: Nash Central Middle School at 1638 S. First Street; 4.7 acres next to Fire Station 2 along Oak level Road, owned by 3MR limited Partnership; and 7.5 acres located at 1860 US Hwy 64A, owned by Nashville Development, LLC. The future land use designation is for self-storage under the name 'Nashville Self-Storage.'

Sketch plans for three new subdivisions in the Spring Hope area have been approved by the Nash County Planning Board. Forty-five new residential lots are proposed in the Sycamore Landing Subdivision; 127 new residential lots are proposed in Bissette's Bay Subdivision; nine new residential lots are proposed in Braxton's Ridge Subdivision.

Nash commissioners approved not only the development of a Farmland Preservation program but deferring yearly monies from rollback taxes to fund it. Nash County Soil & Water Conservation District will develop and administer a pilot program, using rollback taxes, beginning with those collected during the FY2026 year.

The Annual Catfish Luncheon served up by the Nash County Soil & Water District attracted more than 250 people including some serious state brass, who said they knew where to come for food, friends and farming fellowship"Nash County is where



Michael Boone (left) and Tim Renfrow play a few tunes during the open house for an exhibit at the Spring Hope Museum, "Heroes vs. Notable Alumni." A natural follow-up to the previous exhibition, "The History of School Consolidation in Nash County," the new displays feature yearbooks, photos and other memorabilia from local schools, particularly Southern Nash High School, between 1968 to 2020. Graphic photo

people love each other and love to have productive lives," noted the Honorable Paul Newby, NC Supreme Court Chief Justice, adding that he was "delighted to be here." Newby said he was encouraged by the number of Nash young people "stepping up and understanding the importance of farming." The annual event, now in its 52nd year, was held at the Nash County Agriculture Center.

Red Oak town officials have put pen to paper to voice their opposition to a current NC House bill which would rewrite development regulations.

Groundbreaking for UNC Health Nash's seven-story inpatient tower, expected to open in late 2027, took place May 14. The project is part of a five-year Master Facilities Plan which identified the tower as a top priority to meet present-day care standards.

Red Oak firefighters, facing the choice of raising fire district taxes to pay for a much-needed truck or

asking the town council for help, chose the latter- and help they got, with town leaders voting to allocate \$625,000 to the cause. Andrew Brown, Red Oak Fire Chief, wrote the council a letter detailing the need, which stems from ROFD providing rescue services to the area after the Stoney Creek Rescue Department went out of business in December of 2021.

Despite efforts to document the pre-1979 existence of the 'the old Boy Scout Hut' on McLean Street, needed in order to fix the place up, no such historical evidence has been found, leaving town officials a final option of just asking the state for approval. Also in the spirit of historic renovations, Spring Hope's public works recently rehabbed the Ice House, located at 105 N. Ash Street.

The town of Spring Hope is in line to get close to a million dollars in state dollars to pay for improvements to the town's water system, specifically to put the Poplar Street



Nashville's Chamber of Commerce launched its 27th Blooming Festival featuring all of the many traditional good times expected by visitors including the carnival, a parade, crafts, festival food and a variety of live music. The 2025 eveny was headlined by Country Music Artist Matt Stell. Many other live bands filled the streets with music. The 27th Blooming Festival parade adorned the streets of downtown with entertaining entries, floats, bands and the ever-so popular Sudan units such as the Prowler cars and Dunn Clowns. Nearly one-hundred craft and merchandise vendors filled downtown in addition to a variety of festival food. Graphic photo

well back into service and do work on other wells. Jonathan Boone, Deputy County Manager, asked for and received approval from Nash commissioners at their May 5 meeting, relaying that a letter of intent came through in mid-April about the project, which will be paid for through state-directed grant funds.

Town officials in Momeyer are planning a series of 'town hall' meetings, where residents living in the ETJ (Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction), such as the Hinton Plantation, will be invited to talk about potential benefits of annexation. Driving the decision, according to Mayor Will Funderburg, is the progress of bills in both the NC Senate and House that would eliminate ETJ's.

A business at Nashville's Industrial Court, Atlantic Natural Foods, has filed bankruptcy and left the

town of Nashville holding the bag for over \$280,000 in unpaid fees. Lansing said the company owes the town \$118,240 in unpaid personal property taxes, about \$56,500 in unpaid water sewer fees and \$92,050 on a defaulted sewer surcharge payment plan for a total of \$282,758.25.

Nashville American Legion Post 110 placed more than 800 small American flags on the graves of veterans for its Memorial Day Service conducted at Nashville's Forest Hills Cemetery.

A change of venue due to weather for the Joint Veterans Memorial Day 2025 Ceremony Monday in Rocky Mount didn't diminish attendance, as over 100 people took part in the annual event.

JUNE

Police Chief Caleb Shockley, who hit the ground running to take the reins of NPD on March 19th, was officially sworn in at the June 3 Nashville town council meeting.

A planned conditional rezoning request is denied for a 122-lot subdivision off Wildlife Road, Castalia.

Nashville adopts its budget totalling \$16,618,082, which is about \$1.4 million or 8.79% less than last year's because of fewer infrastructure and capital improvement projects, particularly since the purchase of the Fellowship Church property as a potential new town hall complex was scrapped.

Spring Hope adopts its FY 2026 budget totalling \$1,857,800, an increase of about \$123,000 over last year's \$1.73 million.

Nash County's Department of Social Services is praised by the state for its work to improve agency practices, with a letter of commendation sent from NCDHHS to that effect May 21.

Nash County Public Schools launches the CTE Mobile Career Exploration Lab trailer featuring a series of virtual reality career and technical education scenarios.

The unexpected resignation of a Spring Hope town commissioner, Brent Cone, was announced at the June 2 board of commissioners meeting, with Cone not in attendance.

Retired Nash County Sheriff's Deputy Lt. Angel Ricks is awarded her service weapon and The Honor of the Long Leaf Pine from the office

of Governor Josh Stein.

Momeyer's FY2026 budget will offer trash pickup for all 140 homes, with no rise in the tax rate.

Nash County Public School officials approves new attendance policy to allow students off campus during school hours for voluntary religious instruction, paving the way for Lifewise Academy to begin operations at Nashville Elementary.

Four years after finding out about the possibility of FEMA buyout assistance to deal with flood-prone Indian Trail properties, the town has closed on six properties, the most recent three with deed transfers at 545, 549 and 604 Indian Trail. Randy Lansing, town manager, was pursuing buyout opportunities in 2021 through FEMA's Hazard Mitigation program. Sixteen properties may be grant-eligible.

Four retired Nash County Sheriff's deputies were honored with service weapon awards at the June 2 Nash Board of commissioners meeting: Lt. Patrick Brian Ricks, Sgt. Jeffrey Wilkins and Lt. Angel Ricks. Absent but also honored was Sgt. Vernon Battle.

Ongoing renovations to the Red Oak Teacherage, the only surviving building on what was once the campus of the Red Oak Farm Life School, have passed another milestone, that being porch replacement and the launch of roof repairs.

Castalia looks to update its Comprehensive Plan to prepare for all the anticipated growth as well as its zoning ordinances and to also look



Heather Glennon of Middlesex is named County Extension Director, but also Livestock Agriculture Agent, a post that has been unfilled in Nash County for some time. Graphic photo

at establishing an Extraterritorial Jurisdiction, or ETJ, for the town.

Nash County's FY2026 budget is approved. The overall budget, including the General Fund, Enterprise Funds, Special Revenue Funds and Internal Service Funds totals \$146,445,372. The budget includes a county-wide tax rate of 63 cents per \$100 property valuation, the same tax rate that was established last year.

Nash County Sheriff Keith Stone has been appointed to a new governor's advisory council on cannabis.

Red Oak town officials have voted to approve the FY 2025-2026 budget, and begin planning where to put in new sidewalks, should a grant be approved to do so. The budget, increased by just over \$20,000 from last year's, totals \$1,268,100. Commissioners also chose a route

for proposed sidewalks to begin at Ennis Park and stop at the bank.

Cliff Joyner was named 2025 Flag Day Honoree in ceremony at the Elks Lodge #1038, receiving a commemorative framed American flag.

While deciding to sign on the dotted line for another 40 years of sewer service with Rocky Mount, Nashville town leaders are thinking about shopping around for more affordable options for sewer and water, including the possibility of installing more wells.

Nash County Public Schools delays budget adoption, with board of education members voting to do so at a June 17 special called virtual meeting.

Nashville's much-anticipated Barn Quilt Wall hit the bricks with an assortment of colorful squares



Just a couple days after UNC Nash reps appeared before the Nashville town council on June 3, Golden Leaf Foundation announced an award of \$500,000 to the town of Nashville to extend a waterline to the new facility. UNC Health Nash plans to break ground on its new medical office building in Nashville by the end of the month, but the building won't be coming with a usually-required pedestrian sidewalk. UNC Nash reps appeared before the Nashville town council June 3 with a waiver request for the clinic, to be located at 540 Red Oak Road. A rendering provided by Novus Architects Inc. depicts what the UNC Nash-Nashville Medical Office and Urgent Care building may look like.

paving the way for more to come.

Harold D. Cooley Library is staffing a new position, Assistant Library Director, with the post to be filled by Megan Milam, currently one of two library assistants.

Two new subdivisions proposed for the Spring Hope area have had sketch plans approved by the Nash County Planning Board, giving developers one year to submit preliminary construction plans.

The Nash County Animal Shelter, also called the Pet Connection Center, was put on notice by the state concerning multiple violations found at the shelter and has been assessed \$6,700 in fines. Two days after Nash County officials got

a report of multiple violations, the person acting as shelter director was fired and a "full internal review" was launched, along with plans to invite the public in for a weekend event at the shelter.

Retired Nash Superior Court Judge Quentin Sumner begins the process to run for a seat on the Nash County Board of Commissioners in 2026, specifically for District 2 filing paperwork with the Board of Elections to open a campaign finance committee. Ahead of Sumner by a little over a month in filing was Robert Cordell, currently serving his first term on the Nash County Planning Board. Cordell is also interested in running for the District 2 seat.

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JULY

Seventeen animals were adopted from the Nash County Animal Shelter, also called the Pet Connection Center, during a three-hour 'Rescue and Recruit' event Saturday, June 28, while informal on-site interviews for full and part-time jobs were conducted.

In response to a local business-man's request, Nashville planning board members are grappling with adding a new ordinance to cover the use of shipping containers within town limits.

Nash County's Board of Elections has a new chairman by state appointment. John Check, Republican, was appointed by Dave Boliek, State Auditor and Republican, to replace Kelly Shore, Democrat; Shore will remain as a Board member.

"Jade," a Black Lab, joins Nashville Police Department as its newest K-9, partnering with handler Officer Bryson Gibson.

In ongoing attempts to rectify issues at the Pet Connection Center, Nash commissioners vote to add two part-time kennel staff, with an eye towards possibly hiring more in the future.

Braswell Family Farms of Nashville, a fourth-generation egg and feed producer, is buying a shell building in the Nashville Business Center near Highway 64 to use as a cooler and warehouse.

Nash Board Chair Wayne Outlaw announces that he would not be seeking re-election as District 5 county commissioner when his term ends in 2026.

A Nashville woman and two-times graduate of Fayetteville State

University raises money for student scholarships while competing for the title of Ms. Fayetteville State University. Shamica Dawes, a proud Bronco, is already an active member of the Edgecombe-Nash Alumni chapter and FSU National Alumni Association (NAA).

Momeyer town officials vote to delay budget adoption until the town council's regularly scheduled July 14 meeting pushing the town past the July 1 budget adoption deadline as set by the North Carolina General Assembly.

A parade route for this year's Pumpkin Festival was conditionally approved by town commissioners, but not without reservations about pending water main work, which officials say may force an alternate route.

The Nashville Chamber of Commerce presents its Summer Business of the Season Award to the Nashville Exchange.

Momeyer town officials mull projects to fun with its capital reserve including sidewalks, street lights, an internet 'hot spot,' a veterans' memorial, and a park with pavilion. Also mentioned were the possibility of adding land adjacent to the town hall, should any become available, for potential expansion and also a library.

Close to 50 attend the first Twin County Cattlemen's Association meeting held at the Nash County Ag Center.

A rising Senior at Southern Nash High School, 4-H activist Taryn Reams of Spring Hope, was chosen to represent Nash County at the upcoming YouthVoice 2025 North



Red Oak hosts its annual Family Freedom Celebration featuring music, crafts, rides, food and more. Graphic photo

Carolina Association of County commissioners conference in Greenville.

The first ever Community Service Appreciation Day by Union Hill Baptist Church, targeted towards first responders, law enforcement and Nashville town government, took the form of a fried chicken luncheon.

The second annual county-sponsored Juneteenth celebration took place June 19th in the Nash Administration building.

CloudWyze, an internet service provider out of Wilmington, announced the shutdown of its wireless network as of July 25, leaving some Nash County residents scrambling to find a new provider. As of February 2025, Cloudwyze reportedly had about 280 fixed wireless customers throughout the county.

The Nashville Chamber of Commerce holds its 34th annual meeting celebrating members and businesses, with awards. Key Printing is named Business of the



Castalia holds its annual Fourth of July Celebrating featuring a parade, a veteran's ceremony, live music, rides, foods, crafts and more. Graphic photo



Construction begins for a splash park at Glover Park, with a celebratory ground breaking July 23rd. Opening day is anticipated in Spring 2026, once the weather is warm enough. Graphic photo

Year, Nashville Police Chief Caleb Shockley receives the Beyond the Call of Duty Award; special recognition was also given to Southern Bank, a former Business of the Year, for being named by Forbes as Best Bank In America among 200 publicly traded banks.

Nash County leaders approve construction of a third shell building for \$3.1 million dollars at the Middlesex Corporate Centre.

The City of Rocky Mount receives a notice of violation by the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality for effluent discharge from the Tar River Water Treatment Plant's wastewater treatment facility on May 8 and May 9, 2025.

Less than six weeks after the Nash County Animal Shelter was cited by the state for multiple animal care violations, the facility fails another inspection, leading to

another civil penalty of \$9,100.

Former North Carolina Governor and Nashville native son Roy Cooper announces his run for U.S. Senate seat.

A special ceremony to mark the 25-year retirement of Sgt. Stanley "Stan" Ricks of the Nash County Sheriff's Office was held at the historic Nash County courthouse.

AUGUST

Rough grading of the land surface at the Old Red Oak Landfill, a "Superfund" contamination site, is presently underway, the seventh of ten remediation steps required by NCDEQ. The Red Oak Landfill, which operated as a municipal dump beginning the late 1960s and closing in 1977, covers 22.6 acres of a previously wooded 35-acre parcel owned by the Town of Red Oak.

The old Swift Creek Elementary School, sold off by Nash County Public Schools last year, is going back up on the auction block now that the buyer has backed out of the deal.

Nash County Commissioner Gwen Wilkins was elected Director of District 7 for the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC) during the district's caucus meeting on July 31, 2025.

Nash County Cooperative Extension Agent Colby Griffin earns a Distinguished Service Award. It is awarded by both state and national associations of county agricultural agents, recognizing Extension professionals for outstanding service, program excellence and high regard among peers.

An \$85 million expansion at the Crump Group, Inc., the pet treat manufacturer located on the old Universal Leaf campus, is well underway, with the facility footprint increased by about one-third.

Nash County Sheriff's Deputies who serve as School Resource Officers in county schools were honored with a special pinning ceremony to mark completion of new training with the Autism Society. NCSSO's SRO Unit received multicolored jigsaw-puzzle shaped pins with the word "Autism" in bold after spending several weeks in training, a new program made possible through collaboration with Nash Autism Seeking Hope and Cross River Therapy. The Autism training will now be annual recurrent training for the Nash County SRO unit. The Sheriff's Office is also working with the Autism Society to pilot a similar training for first responders.

A citizen-filed challenge to buck Spring Hope Commissioner Drew Griffin's bid for re-election was dismissed after a hearing by the Nash County Board of Elections, with the decision served August 8.

Nash County's Pet Connection Center, hit with two sets of violations by the state in the past two months, has now tripled its staff and upped both staff training and adoption opportunities. It also now has an animal control supervisor in place: Jacob Barley, who was promoted from animal control officer last week. Nash County Manager Stacie Shatzer gave an update at the August 11 board of commissioners meeting.

The Nash County Sheriff's Office School Resource Officer (SRO) Program, which recently expanded training for its deputies in the areas of autism and mental

health, has attracted state notice, and is now considered a "flagship" program for the state.

The mother of an elementary school student was arrested on two charges after an Evolv security system flagged that she had a concealed gun in her purse at M.B. Hubbard Elementary School in Battleboro. Nikeya Dishay Ricks was charged with a felony for possession of a gun on educational property and with carrying a concealed gun, a misdemeanor, after an incident Wednesday, Aug.13.

Michael Bryant Fisher, newly retired from his position at Nash County 9-1-1 Communications Director, was celebrated for his many accomplishments. Along with a proclamation from Nash County recognizing Fisher's more than 31 years of service, Fisher was awarded the state's highest honor, the Order of the Long Leaf Pine, along with a flag flown over the state capitol within minutes of a twin flag awarded at the same time to his brother, Brent Fisher, who retired from county service last year.

With an eye to demographic increase, Nash County leaders and fire departments are learning from their counterparts from Johnston County, which has established a countywide fire service district.

One of Momeyer's capital reserve fund allocation ideas, that of installing a town sidewalk stretching from Bass Mobile Home Court up to A Touch Of The Father's Love has been nixed once learning the price was out of range for their budget. A five-foot wide, 4300 side walk stretching from Young Road to Tressel Loop road, including right-of-way acquisition and utilities, was priced at about \$1.5 million. The town's 20% portion would be \$316,800.

Three people are homeless after a fire which apparently began in a vehicle parked in a carport and spread to the rest of the house. The house, declared unlivable, sustained "very extensive damage" according to the



Longtime Nash County 4-H competitor Page Strickland was inducted into the 4-H Honor Club, achieving the organization's highest honor at the state level.

Spring Hope Fire Chief. The first 9-1-1 communications call for the two-bedroom brick ranch house at 317 N. Walnut, owned by Clayton Crudup, came in at 5:01 p.m. Monday, August 18. It was not known what started the car fire.

A Nashville attorney has embarked on a second career milestone at the state level while still working full-time locally. Kevin N. Lewis of the Valentine Law Firm was sworn in Aug. 12th as a member of the North Carolina State Ethics Commission, attending his first meeting two days later. Lewis was appointed by the General Assembly with the enactment of Senate Bill 770 on June 30, 2025, on the recommendation of President Pro Tempore of the NC Senate, Senator Phil Berger. His term will expire December 31, 2026, as Lewis was appointed to fill a vacancy on the Commission. He will be eligible for reappointment to a four-year term once his current term expires.

Nash commissioners approve a waiver request submitted for the Taylors Store Road subdivision, proposed on the east side of Taylors Store Road near the Franklin, Warren and Halifax County lines. A sketch plan for the owner, Nash Co JV 1, shows ten new residential lots and two open space lots on a 20-acre parcel, with the lots accessed by a new interior private road and served by private well and septic. Although technically located in Nash County, subdivision addresses would have a Hollister zip code.

New overhead lighting for the baseball fields, batting cage and soccer fields at Miracle Park has been approved, with county leaders approving a \$1.5 million dollar bid to cover the work.

A proposal to demolish an existing vape shop in the intersection of S. 1st and Brake Streets in favor of building a new neighborhood convenience store attracted a lot of attention at the Nashville Planning Board meeting packed. In a split vote of 5-1, planning board members recommended rezoning the parcel for the two parcels involved from R-10 residential to B-1 business.

What appeared to be a "grave curb" around an enclosed area outside the Nash Senior Center is now nothing but a pile of rubble, as the site has been cleared for development after initial concerns that there might be a small cemetery there. RGA (Richard Grubb & Associates) excavated the suspected grave site July 23rd "in shallow lifts" to look for any evidence of graves, with none found.

Spring Hope's planned caboose addition to the Depot is still on track but the cost of rolling it into place is more pricey than anticipated, causing town officials to put a hold on some planned streetscape additions. Transportation of the caboose is about a \$25,000 ticket item and doesn't include refurbishing according to Town Manager Andrew Delonno.

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SEPTEMBER



The sixth annual Heroes Field of Honor event held on 9-11 on the grounds of the Fellowship Church was an occasion for a community to remember and mourn those lost, but also to celebrate those on the front lines who give help where needed. Two hundred and fifty flags were laid out in precision order during the event. Graphic photo



State Superintendent of Schools Mo Green visits Nash Early College meeting with students and staff along with Nash County Public Schools personnel to hear how local educators were working towards implementing plan goals. Graphic photo



The grounds upon which the Charters of Freedom are placed at the Nash County Courthouse were the site for a vigil to honor Charlie Kirk Sunday, Sept. 21. Kirk, 31, a conservative activist who co-founded Turning Point USA, was fatally shot while speaking to students at Utah Valley University in Orem, Utah. Graphic photo

The Nashville Graphic was honored in double presentations by the Town of Nashville and Nash County on the occasion of its 130-year anniversary of local journalism.

Spring Hope Mayor Kyle Pritchard has succeeded in getting initial Nash County buy-in regarding the formation of a Statewide Flash Flood Action Committee.

Longtime Nashville resident, Calvin “Chucky” Akeem Ellis dies, the victim of an August 31 shooting at 713 Smith Street. Nashville Police took four suspects into custody, three adults and one reported juvenile offender. Kever Thomas Lee was charged with first degree murder and conspiracy to commit murder, while Otha Chavis Jr. was charged with accessory after the fact and conspiracy to commit murder. Also arrested was Patrick Richardson, charged with felony obstruction of justice. The juvenile was charged with

conspiracy to commit murder.

Residents from Riley Way and N. Walnut Street appeared before the Spring Hope board of commissioners Sept. 2, pleading for help from continued stormwater runoff into their properties.

A planned rezoning request to allow demolition and rebuilding of a larger store at the intersection of 1st and Brake Streets has been withdrawn by property owners after heavy public opposition.

Phase Two of Spring Hope’s ongoing Water Improvement Project has been approved, with a modified bid okayed by the board of commissioners at their Sept. 2 session.

Nashville’s Public Works Director, Brian Grice, was charged with felonies for embezzlement and accessing computers. Grice resigned from his position August 29 after less than a year and half working for the town.

Longtime Nash County Commissioner Fred Belfield Jr., announced plans not to run for re-election to represent District 2 on the board of commissioners.

William “Bill” Trimmer was promoted to the Director of 9-1-1 Communications. Trimmer, who has been serving as interim director since the August 2025 retirement of former 9-1-1 Director Bryant Fisher,

Sworn in as the county’s interim tax administrator at the Sept. 8 commissioners meeting was Shameeka Wade, formerly a tax collection supervisor.

Nash County Public Schools has got its testing data back for the 2024-2025 school year, reporting the best school performance grades (SPGs) and the highest proficiency totals in the last ten years. Nearly 74% of Nash Schools received an A, B, or C in SPGs, with 12 schools exceeding growth and six meeting growth.

Nash County’s animal shelter, The Pet Connection Center, underwent a state inspection Monday and not only passed, but passed with flying colors, with close to 200 individual checkpoints all reported in compliance.

A continued partnership between a local environmental group and the town of Nashville just got a major shot in the arm from the Duke Energy Foundation, who has granted \$25,000 for ongoing project work at Stoney Creek.

East Carolina University announces withdrawal of funding to support The Country Doctor Museum.

Beginning January 1, 2026, Nash County landowners who want to invest in farmland preservation will be able to do so as a formal program has been created and approved by county commissioners.

Nash County was awarded a \$500,000 Accessible Parks grant from the state.



Heat didn’t deter the enthusiasm of those who love classic tractors or cars, spread out and shining in the field at W.B. Ennis Park for the Red Oak Classic Tractor show. Adam Spivey of Red Oak and his daughter, Hanna, wave from atop a 1951 Farmall tractor during the 2025 Red Oak Classic event. Graphic photo

OCTOBER

The late Wayne Moore, former Assistant County Manager and Nash County employee for 36 years, was honored with a commemorative stone in the Nash County 2025 Courtyard Induction ceremony.

The City of Rocky Mount imposes a utility rate hike as part of the city’s “Financial Recovery Plan Amid Budget Crisis.”

The Nash County Community and Rural Development (CRD) Council honors Elsie BOWENS for her 56 years of service to her community with the CRD Community Champion Award.

Nashville Police Department hosts a ‘Civilian Response to Active Shooters Event.

Nash County changes its parameters for funding assistance to non-profit agencies to require that they must have a physical address and base of operations in Nash County or in the City of Rocky Mount to be eligible.

Nash commissioners again denied conditional rezoning permission for the proposed Wildlife Road subdivision in Castalia.

A 58-hour training opportunity for trench rescue was completed at Nashville’s Fire Station 2.

The impending demolition of another historic Nashville home is spurs a cry for preservation measures before it’s too late- including the creation of a new town committee.

Nash County commissioners plan another resolution asking NCDOT to restore the left turn at the intersection

of Old Carriage Road and Eastern Avenue,

Capital expenditures, infrastructure concerns, town growth, and the MSD district were among issues fielded by the three candidates for two seats on the Nashville town council at a Candidates’ Forum sponsored by the Nashville Chamber of Commerce.

The Nash County Senior Center expansion construction bid is awarded to Calvin Davenport Inc. of Rocky Mount.

A work session between Nashville town council members and staff, who did a sit-down with Michael Harvey, a consultant from N-Focus, to work on shipping container ordinance details was left incomplete; council members asked Harvey to craft a more detailed description of the containers and also asked Harvey to work with town attorney Francis Rasberry on one section where the two men did not agree.

The City of Rocky Mount looks to annex land near Shellcastle Road that is closer to Red Oak and Nashville than it is to the city, and is looking for both municipalities to give their permission.

Spring Hope moves to do a watershed analysis of Little Turkey Creek voting to hire the Wooten Company to do the study for about \$30,000, a move which could drop or delay other planned projects off the town’s calendar.

Momeyer adopts a formal Town Waste Ordinance to put on the books. The town contracted with GFL Indus-

tries in September for trash/recycling pickup for 109 residents after budgeting \$26,500 in the FY 2025-2026 budget. The three-year service contract begins Nov. 1.

Nearly 50 students from Nashville Elementary School are receiving voluntary off-campus religious instruction from Lifewise Academy, with a planned expansion later this month to open up two more classes to accommodate 14 more.

A town requirement for certain water users to install backflow prevention has been found to be in error, and plans are being made to reimburse 34 water customers who footed bills with individual installation costs in the thousands of dollars.

In response to public concern over the planned demolition of another home in the town’s historic district, 111 S. Hilliard Street, and spurred on by a presentation by staff from the North Carolina Historic Preservation office, town council members have voted to move forward with discussion about the potential formation of a town Historic Preservation Commission.

Plans for the new Church Street parking lot are underway, with the Downtown Strong Advisory Board (DSAB) voting to recommend putting gravel down on the flat portion of the lot using MSD funds. The lot was purchased by the town in February 2025 for \$100,000 using General Fund money, in response to downtown parking concerns.



Despite multiple obstacles this year, Spring Hope residents and volunteers successfully organized and carried out the 2025 Pumpkin Festival.

Nashville HR Director Trey Sanderson resigns in order to accept a full-time Executive Pastor position at Rise Church. Sanderson, who served as the town’s HR Director since he was hired in December 2023, was already serving at Rise Church as an assistant associate pastor.

Six of nine people running for office in the town of Spring Hope made appearances at an Oct. 22 candidates’ forum.

NOVEMBER

A groundbreaking ceremony was held for the expansion of the Nash County Senior Center (“The Nash”) in Nashville.

One in six people in Nash County are getting government help to buy their groceries - but with the federal shutdown, full benefits stopped Nov. 1. The WIC (Women, Infants or Children) program, however, is presently secure through Nov. 30. Denita DeVega, Director of Nash Social Services, spoke to commissioners at their Nov. 3 meeting. She said 16,765 people in Nash County were participating in the SNAP program as of September, and that about 17% of the county’s population depends on the benefits. Devega said a current contingency plan involves working with local food banks, and that her office has already been passing our referral forms to clients so that they can access those benefits.

The Country Doctor Museum, at risk because of planned fund-

ing and administrative withdrawal by East Carolina University, may be jumping to safety in the arms of the Bailey Chamber of Commerce, which has volunteered to become the new museum steward.

Nash County added new full-time position at Pet Connection Center.

The North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office is taking an active interest in the Nash County Cultural Arts Center, sending four representatives to meet with Shelly Gray, Nash Arts Director. This was a second visit to the former Nashville Baptist Church by Kristi Brantley, local preservation commission/certified local government coordinator at the State Historic Preservation Office, who first came on Sept. 30th to start conversations about the 111-year old building preservation project. Reid Thomas, restoration specialist, said the group was willing to provide technical restoration advice and help Gray

to look for funding sources and sustainable ideas.

Nash County Public School officials are anticipating potential negative effects from federal shortfalls, specifically in seven grant areas- but Nash county counterparts say they will need concrete figures before the school district begins to talk budget plans in March.

A Whitakers man reported missing was found dead one week later, his body seen floating No. 10 near the Rocky Mount Mills dam. Jevon Rashad Battle, 31, of 10046 U.S. 301, Whitakers, was reported missing Nov. 3; his body was later recovered from the Tar River. The case is still an active investigation, NCSO stated.

Michael Vance, of Red Oak, was promoted to Deputy Director of Nash County 9-1-1- Communications Center.

Spring Hope’s library is attracting attention for being one of the most-visited branches of Braswell Memorial Library in Nash

County.

Nancy Beth Gupton was charged with felony child abuse and animal cruelty after her arrest Nov. 12 at her home, located at 5388 W. Castalia Road. A NCSO press release said that deputies, who responded to the scene after a call for assistance from Animal Control, encountered “a disturbing scene or deplorable living conditions” for both a child and animals at the residence, where deceased animals were found in pens. The child, who Gupton said lacked access to education, medical care and dental services, was placed in Nash DSS custody and multiple animals were removed from the property. Gupton posted \$50,000 bond after her initial court appearance Nov. 13. An additional 35 animal cruelty charges were made following an ongoing multi-agency investigation.

The 2025 Regional Women in Agriculture Banquet and Operations Tour, conducted in Whita-

kers and Middlesex locations, fostered networking and empowerment for women farmers.

Nash commissioners pass a resolution to ask the state to undo the missing left turn situation at Old Carriage and Sunset, this time sharing their request with every senator and representative in the state.

Town of Nashville to reimburse 50 customers who had backflow prevention devices installed before town officials discovered that there was not a legal requirement to do so at an estimated cost to the town would be over \$94,000.

Nashville receives a \$1.25 million dollar Water Resource Development grant to use on a three-year Stoney Creek wetlands project.

The town-chartered Boy Scout Troop in Red Oak, which includes both a Cub Scout Pack and a Troop for older boys, has been approved to open its Cub Scout Pack membership to girls.



The 2025 Farm-City Breakfast, was held at the Nash County Cooperative Extension. Linda Fisher, (pictured above) Red Oak cattle and pumpkin farmer, was named Farmer of the Year. Dr. Kim Logner, veterinarian, won the Women in Agriculture Award, and Cade Edwards of Nashville won the award for Next Generation in Agriculture. Brent and Sue Leggett of Leggett Farming Partnerships received the award for Business & Industry. Also honored with an award was Robert Covington, past advisory council chair, for his years of service to the Nash County 4-H program.

DECEMBER

Jason Glover, Nashville’s new Public Works Director, has come full circle, having started his career here as a utility worker fresh out of Northern Nash High School in 2001. Glover, who took the Director position in late October, was most recently Superintendent of Rocky Mount’s Water and Sewer Division and has a deep family connection with Nashville; his father, Jim Glover, was a former Parks and Recreation Director and his father was J.W. Glover for whom Glover Park is named. Among Glover’s current projects are oversight of a new water main going down Red Oak Road and a new vehicle storage building going up behind Public Works.

Two resolutions relating to the potential extension of Spring Hope’s Extra Territorial Jurisdiction were tabled at the Dec. 1 board of commissioners’ meeting after considerable opposition voiced during a public hearing.

Nash County’s Elementary Schools will now have their own full-time, full-day school resource officers, after a \$500,000 request was made to Nash County commissioners at their Dec. 8 meeting.

Nashville town leaders give a conditional nod for development of a new commercial park planned to

hold nine commercial lots, each with its own shell building. The Bailee Commercial Park, under TTL Development LLC, would encompass the south 17.5 acres of the town’s West Nashville Commerce Park along Cooke Road.

A plan to remove iron from Spring Hope’s town wells, following up on an agreement made in 2022, has just been signed off on by project engineers, with commissioners voting to approve a contract task order at their Dec. 1 meeting.

An Elm City woman, Amanda Joy Wiersma, was arrested and charged with both child abuse and animal cruelty. She was charged with one count of felony child abuse/neglect and three counts of felony cruelty to animals.

Lily Urieta has been hired as Nashville’s new HR Director. Urieta, has 10 years’ HR experience and 13 years in local government.

Some residents of the Regency subdivision and Essex Road neighborhoods waiting for town sewer hookups will have until next fall, estimating an October completion date once everything is done. Nineteen homes in Regency Estates, with another 23 on Essex Road, are targeted for connection to the town sewer system, partly to relieve

issues with failing septic systems dating from the 1970s.

The North Carolina League of Municipalities recently recognized the Town of Castalia for its participation in a program designed to help smaller towns promote better financial responsibility and reliability. Castalia converted its financial software over in June 2024, becoming the 15th town to convert through the league’s Municipal Accounting Services (MAS) program. The program was created with American Rescue Plan Act funding to assist smaller municipalities throughout North Carolina with upgrading their financial software and providing them with accounting assistance.

Sgt. J. Gwaltney was named Nashville Police Department Officer of the year, having been selected by his fellow officers as consistently going above the call of service and serving as a mentor, leader, and trusted asset to both the department and the citizens of Nashville.

Conditional rezoning for an 825-acre, leased land solar farm between Nashville and Red Oak is granted by Nash County with the multi-year project subject to 15 imposed conditions.

The historic property at 106 S. Boddie Street, which housed the



The Town of Red Oak held its annual Christmas Festival featuring a parade, vendors, food trucks, rides, live music and Santa Claus. Pictured above, Kaiden and Carter Richardson of Hollister visit with St. Nick just in time to share their wish list. Graphic photo

Nashville Graphic in the early 1900s, is demolished for conversion to private parking for two adjacent buildings, 112 and 108 S. Boddie Street. Both are owned by Adam Williams, who is restoring 112 S. Boddie Street but made the decision to remove 106 S. Boddie due to structural issues.

A memorial to one of Nash County’s fallen sons - Deputy Jared Michael Allison- will take the form of naming the Old Carriage Road bridge over US 64 near Nash Community College in his honor.

One of Nashville’s three operating wells has been taken offline due to high levels of PFA contamination, and town officials are participating in an EPA program to get guidance on how to address the presence of PFAS in the town’s water supply.

A candidate challenge concerning residency was denied by the Nash County Board of Elections, with board members ruling that there were no legal grounds to disqualify commissioner candidate Quentin Summer from running to represent District 2.



The Nashville Chamber of Commerce, partnered with Nashville Parks & Rec, hosted the annual Children’s Christmas Celebration and Bicycle Parade. Pictured above, Carol Ann Lynch of Nashville wins first place in the parade. Graphic photo

Nash County will be losing its longtime Health Director, Bill Hill, as well as its Human Services Board Chairman, Dr. Mike Johnson. Both men announced their retirement news near the close of the Nash County Human Services Board meeting.