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CHESTERFIELD

Road widening begins this month

Stretch of Midlothian Turnpike set to grow in advance of Wegmans

BY NED OLIVER

Richmond Times-Dispatch

Work will begin this month on a yearlong, \$8.5 million effort to widen Midlothian Turnpike between Alverser Drive and Old Buckingham Road — a commercial corridor that boasts multiple auto dealerships, a Sam's Club, a Walmart and a planned Wegmans.

The project will convert the 1.25-mile stretch from four-

lanes to six, in the process making travel faster and safer, according to county officials.

"Increasing traffic volumes and backups have caused not only frustration for motorists, but also a high number of accidents in this corridor," said Jesse Smith, the director of the county's Transportation Department.

The county estimates that 31,600 vehicles travel the section of road a day. They expect that number to increase to 52,100 in 20 years.

The project adds one additional lane of travel in each direction. It also adds a dual left turn lane at Alverser Drive, lon-

ger turn lanes throughout the corridor and a new traffic signal at Walmart Way to accommodate traffic generated by the new Wegmans.

The project will include limited accommodations for pedestrians: a flat grass area along the east side of the road suitable for walking. Smith said that if pedestrian activity along the corridor increases, the county can consider installing sidewalks.

The contractor, Curtis Contracting Inc., said it expects to begin delivering equipment and orange traffic barrels to the construction area next week.

Representatives of Curtis said the company plans to avoid de-

lays for drivers during construction by limiting lane closures to between 9 p.m. to 6 a.m. The company said it will not close any lanes on Friday and Saturday night.

Chesterfield officials said the project has been a county priority for at least a decade, but that funding only recently became available. The cost of the project is split more or less evenly between federal, state and local sources.

Curtis said information about the project will be shared at the website route60widening.com.

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CRIME AND POLICE NEWS

Reported gunman not found at Huguenot High

RICHMOND — Huguenot High School in Richmond was placed on a temporary lockdown shortly before noon Wednesday after someone reported seeing what looked like a student with what might have been a gun near campus, according to Richmond police spokesman James Mercante.

At about 1:20 p.m., Mercante said the scene had just been cleared and police did not find a gun or anyone matching the description of the student that was provided by the caller.

"The school was locked down out of an abundance of caution," Mercante said, adding that officers arrived to the school within two minutes of the call.

The school was to be placed on a "modified lockdown" for the rest of the day as a precaution, Mercante said.

Inmate hangs self in Chesterfield jail cell

CHESTERFIELD — An inmate at the Chesterfield County Jail died Saturday after hanging himself in his jail cell, county officials said Wednesday.

Deputies administered CPR to Correy Lee Davis, 27, of the 8000 block of Wales Drive in Henrico County, after he was found in his single-inmate cell during a security check, officials said.

Chesterfield EMS responded and Davis was taken to CJW Medical Center, where he died.

The county said Davis was being held without bond on several Chesterfield and Henrico drug-related charges.

5 ex-counselors convicted in scheme in Va. Beach

NORFOLK — Five former employees of a Virginia Beach mental health counseling firm have been convicted of charges in connection with a nearly \$2.5 million health care fraud scheme.

A jury found Barbara Bing, Verline Harris, Arlette Johnson, Alfreda Stallion and Johnny Stallion each guilty of at least one felony on the 16th day of trial Tuesday.

The defendants worked as counselors at Progressive Counseling Services.

An indictment says Progressive's owner and employees received \$2.48 million in fraudulent reimbursements from Medicaid.

Defense attorneys praised the verdict as almost a victory because the jury did not reach a verdict on 45 of 58 counts.

Five other employees have reached plea deals with prosecutors.

Matthew's lawyers seek to ban media at hearing

FAIRFAX — Lawyers for the man charged with killing University of Virginia student Hannah Graham want a judge to ban reporters from a pretrial hearing in a separate case.

A victim in a 2005 sexual assault is expected to testify at a pretrial hearing Thursday in Fairfax.

Jesse Matthew, 33, is charged in the Fairfax attack, and in a separate case with Graham's death.

Thursday's hearing is to determine whether the victim can reliably identify Matthew as her attacker.

Matthew's lawyers say they believe her recollection of the decade-old attack has been corrupted by pretrial publicity that has frequently featured Matthew's photo.

In a motion filed this week, Matthew's lawyers requested to ban reporters from Thursday's hearing, saying press coverage just days before his scheduled jury trial will taint the juror pool.

— From staff and wire reports

Police identify missing canoeist

Henrico man, 40, fell into James River while boating Monday

BY TED STRONG AND BRANDON SHULLEETA

Richmond Times-Dispatch

Rescue officials on Wednesday recovered the body of a missing canoeist who was lost in the James River on Monday.

Richmond police identified the body as that of Venson V. Vaughn, 40, of the 1600 block of Westhill Road in Henrico County. Officials said the state medical examiner's office will determine the cause of death.

Henrico County fire officials, working in conjunction with the Virginia State Police and the Richmond fire department, recovered the body after 12:30 p.m. near Pony Pasture above the Z Dam, officials said.

The body was found after a member of the Henrico Division of Fire's command staff spotted something floating in the river while riding along Riverside Drive, Henrico fire Capt. Daniel E. Rosenbaum said in an email.

Wednesday was the third day of the search for Vaughn, who fell into the James on Monday after his canoe overturned.

Authorities were called about 5:30 p.m. Monday to the river near the 9100 block of Cherokee Road after someone spotted an overturned canoe and believed the canoeists had safely made it out of the water, fire officials said.

"Then when crews were on the bank, going to retrieve the canoe, one of the gentlemen in the canoe said: 'Hey, did you all get the guy that was hanging on to the side?'" Richmond fire Lt. Chris Armstrong said, adding that officials were initially unaware that anyone was in the water but immediately launched a search once they were notified.

Armstrong said it is common for the fire department to retrieve empty canoes that have been swept into the river.

The man who swam back to shore told fire officials that the other person in the canoe didn't know how to swim and was not wearing a flotation device, officials have said.

On the evening of the accident, rescuers searched but did not find Vaughn. They stopped the search for the day about 8 p.m. as lightning, heavy rain and powerful wind swept through the area.

The search efforts by more than a dozen Henrico County and Richmond rescuers continued from about 9 a.m. until late Tuesday afternoon, Armstrong said.

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NO DODGING THESE RAINDROPS



BOB BROWN/TIMES-DISPATCH

A pedestrian in Richmond braved the rain Wednesday outside the Virginia State Capitol as persistent showers covered the area. Rain is expected for the next three days. Today should be cloudy with showers and a high of 74.

ChildFund raising money to provide 3,400 bikes for girls in 12 countries

Henrico charity seeks to tie in donations to September races here

BY LOUIS LLOVIO

Richmond Times-Dispatch

ChildFund is looking to raise enough money to buy 3,400 bicycles for young girls in 12 countries as part of an effort tied to this year's cycling world championships in Richmond.

The Henrico County-based nonprofit is asking businesses to donate or raise \$1,000 each, enough to buy 10 bikes, to help girls go to school.

The fundraising effort announced Wednesday morning is tied to ChildFund International's partnership with Richmond 2015, the organizing body putting on the UCI Road World Championships.

ChildFund is looking to raise

money for the bikes through workplace giving campaigns, corporate donations and online contributions from individuals.

The partnership with the race organizers is an extension of ChildFund's Dream Bike program, which began last year.

The program helps girls who have to walk to school for hours and often in dangerous areas.

Bicycles can "help fulfill the dreams of thousands of children in developing countries, en-

promising future."

The nonprofit says "every year a girl in a developing country remains in school increases her future earning power by as much as 20 percent."

The bikes will go to girls in Ethiopia, India, Laos, Indonesia and eight other countries in Asia and Africa.

The partnership with the race organizers is an extension of ChildFund's Dream Bike program, which began last year.

"The bicycles purchased through the Dream Bike program are more than bikes; they are lifelines to a more promising future." Anne Lynam Goddard, president

abling them to finish their education," Anne Lynam Goddard, president of ChildFund, said in a statement. "The bicycles purchased through the Dream Bike program are more than bikes; they are lifelines to a more

ChildFund has given away 3,100 bikes since the program began.

The world championships begin Sept. 19.

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Work at VCU art institute to resume

Construction stalled 5 months ago to allow for change to design

BY KARIN KAPSIDELIS

Richmond Times-Dispatch

Construction work is expected to resume in about two weeks on Virginia Commonwealth University's stalled Institute for Contemporary Art project.

Work on the \$35 million project at Broad and Belvidere streets was halted about five months ago to address modification to the design, said ICA Director Lisa D. Freiman.

Such a delay "is not unusual with a building of this com-

plexity as it gets closer to construction," she said by email. "Enough progress has been made to be able to begin work on the foundation phase of the project."

The progress so far can be viewed on the website's live construction cam (ica.vcu.edu), which Wednesday showed a muddy site that is to be transformed into a new gateway to the city and to VCU.

The building's geothermal wells have been completed and shoring is in place in preparation for foundation work, Freiman said.

The new schedule for completion is being studied, she said, "but we are targeting an end of 2016 construction completion and a 2017 opening."

VCU broke ground last June on the 43,000-square-foot building, with the initial timetable anticipating an opening next year.

The center, a noncollecting museum with rotating exhibitions of experimental art and performances, was designed by New York-based architect Steven Holl.

Its exterior will feature pre-weathered, satin-finish zinc and clear- and translucent-glass walls, with double entrances opening to VCU's Monroe Park Campus and the busy city intersection.

The center will contain a 250-seat auditorium, a sculpture garden, a café and a courtyard.

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