‘Things Are Looking Up’

Construction Could Lead Local Economy’s Rebound, Development Leaders Say

By JEREMY HUNT
Daily News-Record

HARRISONBURG — One of the hardest-hit industries in the economic downturn of five years ago could surge this year in Harrisonburg and Rockingham County.

Economic development leaders for the city and county said Thursday that construction is poised for an increase of nearly 13 percent in 2013, based on estimates from a Richmond-based research firm.

Billy Vaughn, director of community development for Rockingham County, and Harrisonburg Economic Development Director Brian Shull presented the projection by Chmura Economics and Analytics at the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Chamber of Commerce’s annual economic outlook.

More than 160 people attended the morning meeting at James Madison University’s Festival Conference and Student Center, including Barry DuVal, president of the Virginia Chamber of Commerce, and Jane Kusiak, executive director of the Council on Virginia’s Future.

Residential construction data shows Chmura’s projection could be at the very least, on the right track.

The number of residential building permits issued in the city and county dropped in 2009, 2010 and 2011, but started to pick up in 2012, reaching about 75 percent of

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Ex-Cop Hunted In Hills

LAPD Says Fugitive Carried Out Threat To Wage ‘Warfare’

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — A fired police officer who threatened to bring “warfare” to the Los Angeles Police Department went on a shooting rampage that left a policeman and two others

TOTAL LOSS

Athlete Charged

HHS Football Player Accused Of Raping 15-Year-Old In City

By PETE DoLEA
Daily News-Record

HARRISONBURG — City police arrested a Harrisonburg High School football player Tuesday after a 15-year-old girl accused him of raping her over the weekend.

Weylin Holmes, 18, of Harrisonburg, is charged with felony rape, felony abduction and two felony counts of
Grottoes Area Home Burns
Residents Of Converted Schoolhouse ‘Lost Everything’ In Blaze

By PETE DoLEA
Daily News-Record

GROTTOES — Wanda Morris fought back tears Thursday morning as she peered at her mother’s home, an old 16-room converted brick schoolhouse from which smoke billowed following an early morning blaze.

Her mother, Jen Breeden, her mother’s friend, Bane Puckett, and her 46-year-old brother, Roy Breeden Jr., lived at the home about two miles south of Grottoes in Augusta County. Her brother was the only one inside when the fire started.

“They lost everything ... their clothes, furniture,” the Grottoes resident said, “but they’re alive. That’s the main thing.”

Assistant Fire Chief Chandler Hardy of the Grottoes Volunteer Fire Department said firefighters from surrounding areas were dispatched around 1 a.m. to the home at 3763 East Side Highway, near the intersection with Patterson Mill Road.

Firefighters were on the scene within 10 minutes, he said.

But it was already too late to save the home. “We saw fire coming out the front door extending up to the roof,” he said, adding that firefighters began attacking the blaze, trying to stop it from spreading. “It was pretty well advanced. Once it got to the roof, it was hard to control.”

Wanda Morris said her brother barely escaped the fire, perhaps owing his life to his dog, Cocoa.

After taking Cocoa out for a walk, Roy Breeden returned to the home and smelled smoke. When he opened his mother’s bedroom to check, he was bombarded by smoke.

Breeden grabbed his cellphone and the dog and bolted from the house. Everything he left behind was destroyed.

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10-Year Plan Path Mapped For Immigrants

WASHINGTON — Illegal immigrants might face a 10-year road map to citizenship under immigration reform expected to pass the Senate this week.


“Today’s announcement is a very important step in the ongoing conversation about immigration reform,” Durbin said.

“While there is still a ways to go to ensure the reforms we seek are passed, today’s announcement shows that our government has a clear path toward comprehensive immigration reform,” Menendez said.

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Lesson Of Benghazi
Panetta, Military: Too Far, Too Late Not Good Enough

Associated Press

Defense Secretary Leon Panetta and Army Gen. Martin Dempsey, the joint chiefs chairman, told the Senate Armed Services Committee on Tuesday that a better understanding of the threat may have prevented the 2012 attack on the U.S. diplomatic compound in Benghazi, Libya, that killed four Americans.

“I think we are all in agreement that it was too far and too late,” Panetta said. “And I think we all also agree that that’s not going to work. People see the work that we do and the fact that it’s going to be even more of an effort to inform the American people of the importance of the military’s role.”

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tack in the nearly five months since the assault, and they kept up the politically charged onslaught on Thursday. The military also found itself under attack, with at least one senator accusing the Joint Chiefs chairman of peddling falsehoods.

Faced with repeated questions about where units were during the attack and what they were doing, Dempsey said the military was taking steps to deal with the next crisis.

“We’ve asked each of the services to examine their capability to build additional reactionlike forces, small, rapidly deployable forces,” Dempsey said.

In more than four hours of testimony, Panetta and Dempsey described a military facing with not a single attack over several hours, a staging base in Europe.

The first of those U.S. military units did not arrive in the region until well after the attack was over and Americans had been flown out of the country.

Defense officials have repeatedly said that even if the military had been able to get units there a bit faster, there was no way they could have gotten there in time to make any difference in the deaths of the four Americans.

“The United States military is not and should not be a global 911 service capable of arriving on the scene within minutes to every possible contingency around the world,” Panetta told the Senate Armed Services Committee.

That failed to placate Republicans on the panel. In one fierce exchange, time and positioning of forces, “we wouldn’t have gotten there in time.”

Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., questioned President Barack Obama’s level of concern during the crisis.

“During the eight-hour period, did he show any curiosity?” Graham asked.

Panetta said there was no question the president was concerned about American lives.

Panetta also pushed back against Republican criticism that the Obama administration ignored warning signs about the attack. The Pentagon chief insisted there were no signs of or specific intelligence about an imminent attack. In the six months before the assault, the government was apprised of 281 threats to diplomatic missions, consulates and other facilities worldwide, he said.

at the department eight years ago.

Monica Quan and her fiancé, Keith Lawrence, were found shot in their car at a parking structure at their condominium on Sunday in Irvine. Quan, 28, was an assistant women’s basketball coach at Cal State Fullerton. Lawrence, 27, was a public safety officer at the Uni-

you would have to wait anyway,” Menendez said. “The difference is you will get the opportunity to be here, to come forward, to work, to travel, and in doing so, to earn your pathway” to citizenship.

A green card is the crucial first step toward citizenship, although it takes up to five years for a green card holder to become a citizen under current law. So if it takes 10 years to get a green card, the total wait time for citizenship could be closer to 15, advocates fear.

The emerging legislation, which faces an uncertain future in Congress, is expected to require illegal immigrants to petition for citizenship behind those already attempting the process. The exact process and length of time for an illegal immigrant to get a green card is just one of many contentious issues being discussed by Durbin, Menendez and six other senators in a bipartisan group trying to complete an immigration bill by spring.

Provisional Status Would Be Immediate

Immigrants

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long someone would have to wait in a new provisional legal status before qualifying for permanent residency and a green card. The legislation is expected to grant provisional legal status immediately to many of the estimated 11 million illegal immigrants now in the country, but they couldn’t get green cards until the border has been secured, and they would have to meet criteria that include learning English and paying fines.

The process “is likely to be in the range of 10 years, I say in the range because we have not nailed this down,” Durbin said.

Menendez said a 10-year wait would not be inordinate considering that under current law many illegal immigrants face a 10-year prohibition on returning to the country if they leave.

“If you think about it, under current law there is a 10-year bar, so the bottom line is

Suspect Remains In Jail Without Bond

Athlete

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The girl told police Holmes raped her once they were inside the room, the affidavit states.

Holmes is being held in Rockingham County Jail without bond. He is scheduled to appear in Rockingham County Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court on Feb. 28 for a preliminary hearing.

The hearing will be held in juvenile court because of the victim’s age.

Holmes, a wide receiver at HHS, is the younger brother of Virginia Tech redshirt freshman tailback Michael Holmes, a two-time Associated Press Group AA Player of the Year for the Blue Streaks.

Weylin Holmes led the Blue Streaks with 820 receiving yards and 10 touchdowns on 39 catches as a junior. This past fall, Holmes finished his senior campaign with 340 yards and five TDs on 18 catches.

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