

MARTINSVILLE BULLETIN

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Reopen or not? No easy decision

How and when to reopen to the public isn't a one-size-fits-all process for those facilities in this region that provide entertainment, education and convening activities.

By Amie Knowles
Special to the Bulletin

Who's open? Who's not? Who's somewhere between? Many are asking those questions about businesses, learning centers, event centers and nonprofit organizations in the Martinsville and the surrounding area.

Slowly but surely, businesses and facilities in Southwest Virginia are opening their doors and inviting people inside, but others are waiting a little longer to roll out their red carpets.

It was clear back in March and April

when the pandemic and stay-at-home orders made closing imperative, but how do places such as the Virginia Museum of Natural History or the Reynolds Homestead or the Spencer-Penn Centre — usually teeming with people and activities about now — fit into the different phases of Gov. Ralph Northam's reopening plan, which begins Phase III on Wednesday.

At the Spencer-Penn Centre in Spencer, Susan Sabin, executive director, expressed a hybrid existence. Her nonprofit facility isn't open in the same way that it

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The Virginia Museum of Natural History reopened on June 19 with free admission for that day. The museum plans to operate on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays until further notice.

When you turn 100, the party must go on

The coronavirus pandemic didn't deter the 100th birthday of Minnie Ruth Dandridge Martin, which was celebrated in grand style Sunday during a drive-by — of sorts — event at Meadow Christian Church in Martinsville. She wore a crown and a sash and was dressed in her Sunday finest, and everyone else wore masks in respect of the novel coronavirus and COVID-19. She watched, surrounded by family members, some nearly as old as she, and well-wishers, as a parade of vehicles looped past the church, led by emergency vehicles from the city and Henry County. She also received proclamations of her day from both the city and the county. To see more photographs from the event, visit www.martinsvillebulletin.com.



Martinsville Vice-Mayor Chad Martin (left), City Council member Jim Wood and Mayor Kathly Lawson present proclamations from both the city and Henry County.



The large crowd on hand at Meadow Christian Church.



RICK DAWSON/SPECIAL TO THE BULLETIN

100th birthday celebrant Minnie Martin wears a crown and holds flowers presented to commemorate her day.



RICK DAWSON/SPECIAL TO THE BULLETIN

Cousin Willie Mae Staples (left) and brother Johnnie Dandridge of Norfolk, who is 98, sit in front of the church with Martin.

New laws coming your way

Virginia laws taking effect Wednesday affect guns, voting, cellphones, gambling, statues and more.

By Justin Mattingly and Mel Leonor
Richmond Times-Dispatch

Hundreds of new laws Virginia lawmakers approved this spring will go into effect Wednesday, reflecting the liberal and progressive agenda of the General Assembly's new majority.

Democrats, who now control the legislature and the Executive Mansion for the first time in more than two decades, used their newfound power to instill sweeping reforms on gun control, voting rights and LGBTQ rights, among other things. The new laws affect aspects of Virginians' lives from education to abortion, Confederate statues to housing.

Lawmakers introduced more than 3,900 bills and resolutions this year, the most since at least 1994, according to the state's Legislative Information System. A total of 1,289 of those measures cleared the legislature and were signed by Gov. Ralph Northam, the most since the

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RICHMOND TIMES-DISPATCH

Richmond police Lt. Edward Capriglione talked in May about a city law banning cellphone use while driving. It preceded a similar state law to go in effect Wednesday.

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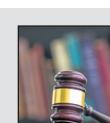
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WEATHER

Sunny and warm with thunderstorms possible. Humid tonight.

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