

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	ALMANAC
					Yesterday's High 63 Yesterday's Low 51 Record High 85 in 1991 Record Low 25 in 1986
Cloudy	Mostly Cloudy	Isolated T-storms	Partly Cloudy	Scattered T-storms	SUN & MOON
Precip Chance: 20%	Precip Chance: 10%	Precip Chance: 30%	Precip Chance: 15%	Precip Chance: 55%	Sunrise 7:13 a.m. Sunset 7:31 p.m.
70° 54°	79° 62°	80° 54°	77° 57°	75° 48°	Full Last New First
					3/28 4/4 4/11 4/20

GOOD MORNING The Sanford Herald appreciates all of its readers. Today, we'd like to thank Lottie Harward of Sanford for subscribing.

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Wednesday, March 24, 2021 sanfordherald.com • \$1

Commission chair apologizes for emails

BY NANCY MCCLEARY
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The chairman of the Lee County commissioners apologized Monday for failing to make clear he spoke for himself in emails sent to the Board of Education about two of its members.

Chairman Kirk Smith made the

apology during a special called meeting Monday of the commissioners.

Smith said he did not make clear in the emails that he was speaking for himself and not as a representative for the county commissioners.

"Last week, after receiving the

disturbing information about Board of Education member Patrick Kelly, I sent an email to members of the Board of Education demanding his resignation," Smith said.

The school board is conducting an informal investigation of Kelly after photos of him appeared

on web sites promoting bondage, submission and sado-masochistic sex practices.

Smith's email was sent with a Lee County letterhead.

Smith said he also failed to make clear that he was speaking



Kirk Smith

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Student exchange program seeks host families

BY JASMINE GALLUP
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A local student exchange program is looking for Lee County families to host high-schoolers from around the world.

Borderless Friends Forever, a Cary-based nonprofit founded in 2014, is working with the school district to place international students in Lee County and Southern Lee high schools, said Executive Director Crystal Allis.

In years past, the program has brought students to Lee County from Romania, Jordan and Thailand. Currently, Allis is looking for three to five local families willing to host students for the 2021-22 school year, she said.

"The host family volunteers to provide three meals a day, a place to sleep, a place to study ... (and) general parenting, love, guidance, that sort of thing," Allis said.

The program has about 150 students this year, from 28 different countries, Allis said. Participants are ages 15-18 and speak English, she added.

Families interested in hosting can complete an online application that

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Submitted Photo

Omer, 15, a Lee County exchange student from Turkey, stands in Washington, D.C., last year.



Submitted Photo

Exchange students Victoria, 15, from Spain, and Wanvisa, 15, from Thailand, were part of the program recently.

New school budget proposes 2% raise for teachers

BY JASMINE GALLUP
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A 2% increase in pay for Lee County teachers and staff is one of the big-ticket items in the 2021-22 budget proposal presented to the board of education Monday.

The budget proposal includes an increase of \$1.5 million over last year's budget, which remained flat because of the coronavirus pandemic. At the time, costs to the school district due to the public health crisis remained uncertain, so the school board did not request an increase in local funding from county commissioners.

This year, the district hopes to make up the difference by

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Lee County approves Project Star incentives

BY NANCY MCCLEARY
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The Lee County Commissioner voted Monday in favor of an economic development incentive package worth more than \$6 million to entice a life sciences company to locate in Sanford.

The company has not been identified, but is called Project Star.

If Project Star locates here, the impact could mean a nearly 2-cent reduction in the property tax over the seven years of the agreement, according to Lisa Minter, the county's financial officer.

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Cooper easing some COVID-19 restrictions

BY NANCY MCCLEARY
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Gov. Roy Cooper issued an Executive Order on Tuesday that will ease some of the COVID-19 pandemic-imposed restrictions.

The major changes are an increased capacity indoors and outdoors for some operations, Cooper said Tuesday in a televised news conference.

This includes museums,

aquariums, retail businesses and shops, salons and personal care shops, he said.

"The new order will allow some places to increase capacity up to 75% indoors and up to 100% outdoors," Cooper said. "They include restaurants, breweries, wineries,



Gov. Roy Cooper

amusement parks, gyms

and pools and other recreation establishments."

Bars, sports arenas, conference centers and venues for receptions and live performances will be allowed to increase the capacity up to 50% indoors and outdoors, according to Cooper.

He also announced that

effective Friday, the 11 p.m.

curfew for serving on-site alcohol will be lifted.

"The mass gathering limit, which covers other kinds of gatherings not otherwise laid out in the order, will be increased to 50 indoors and 100 outdoors," Cooper said.

That includes high school sports.

However, Cooper said

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OBITUARIES

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