

**Order extension may mean delayed start for high school football. 1B**

**Protest erupts outside Johnson City pawn shop. 5A**

## WORDS OF COMFORT

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** *With so many churches having to suspend worship services during the coronavirus pandemic, we are asking local pastors to partner with us in bringing a daily message of hope and comfort to readers.*

By **JAMES REASOR**

In my daily spiritual walk and routines, which help me to keep my eyes, mind and heart focused on God and His son Jesus Christ, I listen to Christian praise-worship music! If I've had a day where I feel ragged and tired of many stressful situations that have happened, I will often listen to my favorite praise-worship groups and performers. There are many great and moving groups and recording artists who are definitely motivating, uplifting and inspirational, and who provide us with scripturally grounded music.

One of my favorite groups is the Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir! Wow! Their performances are moving, uplifting and motivating! As you are listening, it is hard to sit still and remain composed. You definitely feel the energy coming from these dynamic singers and musicians! There are many songs that they've recorded and performed that I have found inspirational and encouraging, but the one that I have enjoyed the most would be: "Jesus Is." When you listen to it, you realize there is a Biblical support for this song. In John 14:6, Jesus Christ says, "I am the way, the truth and the life, there is no way to the Father except through me." I love both the song ("Jesus Is") and this Bible verse because both help me to ensure my focus and priorities are in the right place: Jesus!

Another favorite performer is Lincoln Brewster! He has a mellow and soothing voice, but definitely knows how to work a "six-string." He does a great job of communicating where his heart is, which reflects God and His Son Jesus Christ. A favorite song he has performed is "God You Reign," with the name of the song being evident of God's omnipotence and sovereignty. I am thankful God has provided us with many beautiful creations that Lincoln Brewster sings about! In today's world, filled with many troubling and concerning events, this song by Mr. Brewster reassures us that "God reigns" and is sovereign and in control. Psalms 97:1 reminds us of what "God You Reign" indicates: "The Lord reigns, let the earth be glad; let the distant shores rejoice."

Sometimes our worship practices may be in the form of "organized religion" related to the assembly of believers in a common place, such as a building. However, we can worship God anywhere and anytime, and one great way of doing it is to sing praises to Him! What is your favorite song — the one that lifts your spirit?

*James Reasor is a volunteer chaplain with Ballad Health.*

# Demolition ready to begin

## Highwall on outskirts of Norton being leveled, making 'a viable commercial or industrial site'

By **MIKE STILL**  
mstill@timesnews.net

**NORTON** — In the next 30-60 days, the highwall overlooking the crossroads of U.S. Route 23 and U.S. Alternate Route 58 will become a memory.

Project Intersection — a joint venture between Norton and Wise, Lee, Scott and Dickenson counties' Lonesome Pine Regional Industrial Facilities Authority (LPRIFA) — is nearing the start of blasting and removing the remnant

of surface mining that overlooks the two highways and 40 years of commercial development on Norton's outskirts.

"We're taking an unusable piece of property that was a safety issue and turning it into a viable commercial or industrial site," said Norton City Manager Fred Ramey. The city, as an LPRIFA member, is handling much of the project administration.

Seventy-five feet will come off the top of the highwall,

See **NORTON**, Page 3A



MIKE STILL — MSTILL@TIMESNEWS.NET

With power lines moved and trees cleared, crews are set to begin leveling 'one of the most famous or infamous landmarks in the area.' Glass Machinery and Excavation has started getting heavy machinery at the site, and project managers have done pre-blasting surveys of businesses and homes.

## Gov. Lee extends state of emergency

By **KIMBERLEE KRUESI**  
Associated Press

**NASHVILLE** — Gov. Bill Lee on Monday extended the state of emergency for another two months as Tennessee continues to see large jumps in people testing positive for COVID-19.

Lee, a Republican, initially imposed the state of emergency on March 12 in order to free up funding and relax rules regarding the treatment and containment of COVID-19. It was set to expire June 30 after he first extended the declaration in May.

The state of emergency urges — but does not require — limited activity, maintain social distancing and staying home whenever possible. It also limits social and recreational gatherings of 50 or more people — though places of worship are exempt, as well as weddings, funerals and related events.



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee initially imposed the state of emergency on March 12 in order to free up funding and relax rules regarding the treatment and containment of COVID-19. It was set to expire June 30 after he first extended the declaration in May.

It also includes many other sweeping provisions, such as expanding access to telehealth services, continuing delivery of alcohol services and allowing prescriptions to be available in 90-day supplies.

Meanwhile, driver's licenses and photo ID renewal deadlines will be extended until Nov. 15. Payments to reinstate driver's licenses are also being extended. Many health care licenses, certifications and registrations are now pushed back until Aug. 31.

Additionally, Lee extended provisions allowing officials to meet electronically, rather than in person, as long as they provide some sort of electronic access to the public. The governor's office said decisions about the best way to return to in-person governmental meetings "remain ongoing."

A separate executive order also extended Monday allows remote notarization and witnessing of documents.

See **GOV. LEE**, Page 2A

## COVID-19 cases climb in NE Tenn.

By **MIKE STILL**  
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Tennessee saw more than 2,100 new COVID-19 cases in two days, according to reports a day after the state's communicable disease data system crashed.

According to the Tennessee Department of Health webpage ([www.tn.gov/health/cedep/ncov](http://www.tn.gov/health/cedep/ncov)), 2,125 new cases and eight deaths were reported since Saturday's data post for pandemic totals of 42,297 and 592, respectively. The latest case update represents an average of 1,062 cases for each of the past two days.

Northeast Tennessee saw 26 new cases in the region since Saturday. Hawkins added four cases for a total of 49 and two deaths, while Sullivan County's total rose by four to 87 cases and two deaths.

Washington and Greene counties posted the highest increases in the region — seven cases each — for 128 cases and no deaths and 81 and two deaths, respectively.

See **COVID-19**, Page 2A



METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Beginning in July, Bays Mountain Park is bringing back its paddling programs, including kayak lessons, evening canoe/kayak tours and lake tours focused on the beavers and waterfowl that live in and around the reservoir.

## Bays Mountain Park brings back paddling programs

By **MATTHEW LANE**  
mlane@timesnews.net

**KINGSPORT** — From beginner canoeing to experienced kayakers, Bays Mountain Park will have a program for every paddling experience this summer.

Beginning in July, the park is bringing back its ever-popular paddling programs with more dates for guests to enjoy the

lake from a new perspective. Programs include kayak lessons, evening canoe/kayak tours and lake tours focused on the beavers and waterfowl that live in and around the reservoir.

"With kayak sales increasing, now's the time for us to provide for paddling programs," Senior Naturalist

See **PADDLING**, Page 2A

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### WEATHER

High Low  
**85 69**  
Cloudy with a 65% chance of rain



## Knack signs with Dodgers

Landon Knack officially became a professional baseball player on Monday when the former East Tennessee State pitcher signed his contract with the Los Angeles Dodgers. The pitcher said he'll find out more about the Dodgers' plans for him on Friday. **1B**



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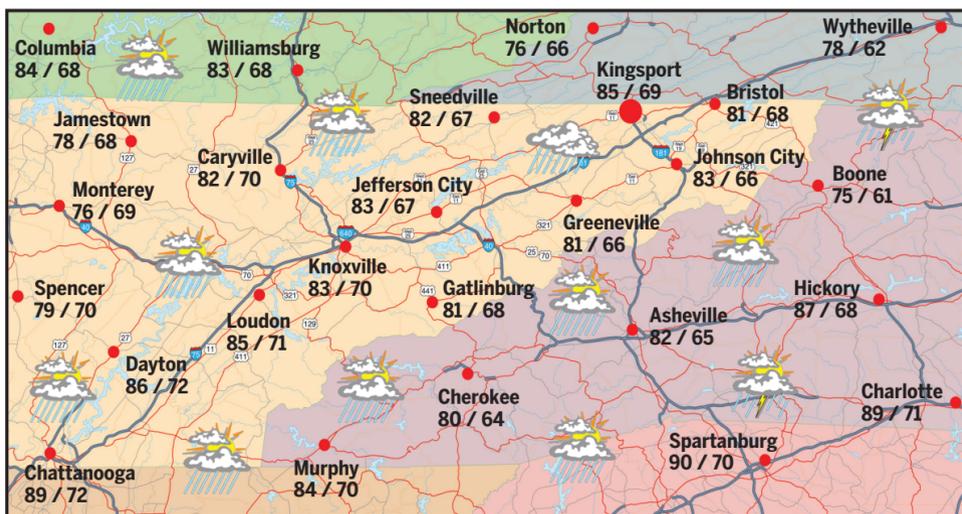
# Kingsport Weather

TODAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Few showers	Scattered t-storms	Partly cloudy areas of fog	Partly cloudy	Partly cloudy
<b>85   69</b>	<b>83   67</b>	<b>85   68</b>	<b>88   69</b>	<b>89   67</b>

## LOCAL FORECAST

Today we will see cloudy skies with a 65% chance of showers, high temperature of 85°, humidity of 66%. South southwest wind 2 to 5 mph. The record high temperature for today is 104° set in 1936. Expect mostly cloudy skies tonight with a 70% chance of showers, overnight low of 69°. South southeast wind 1 to 5 mph. The record low for tonight is 52° set in 1954. Wednesday, skies will be mostly cloudy with a 65% chance of showers and thunderstorms, high temperature of 83°, humidity of 67%. South southwest wind 2 to 7 mph. Wednesday night, skies will be mostly cloudy with a 70% chance of showers and thunderstorms, overnight low of 67°. South southwest wind 1 to 6 mph.

## REGIONAL WEATHER FORECAST



## ALMANAC PAST 24 HOURS

Temperature	
High yesterday	85°
Low yesterday	69°
Normal high	87°
Normal low	64°
Record high	103° in 1934
Record low	51° in 1954

Precipitation	
Past 24 hours	0.01"
Month to date	2.13"
Year to date	33.56"
Normal year to date	21.02"

## AREA RIVER/LAKE LEVELS

Name	Full Pool	Current	Change
Holston	1,729.0	1,732.0	+1.1
Watauga	1,975.0	1,960.8	+0.6
Boone	1,385.0	1,353.0	-0.4
Henry	1,263.0	1,259.8	-0.8
Cherokee	1,075.0	1,069.5	+0.6
Douglas	1,002.0	990.1	+1.2
Fontana	1,710.0	1,689.3	+0.1
Norris	1,020.0	1,022.5	+0.2

## AROUND OUR STATE

City	Today			Wednesday		
	Hi	Lo	Wx	Hi	Lo	Wx
Chattanooga	89	72	sh	83	74	t
Clarksville	83	74	sh	86	72	sh
Knoxville	83	70	sh	92	71	t
Memphis	91	77	t	94	79	t
Nashville	84	73	sh	96	75	sh

## UV INDEX

8 a.m.	1
Noon	2
4 p.m.	1

0-2: Minimal  
3-4: Low  
5-6: Moderate  
7-9: High  
10+: Very High

The higher the UV index, the higher the need for eye and skin protection.

## SUN AND MOON

Sunrise	6:15 a.m.
Sunset	8:52 p.m.
Moonrise	4:15 p.m.
Moonset	2:42 a.m.
Sunrise tomorrow	6:15 a.m.
Sunset tomorrow	8:52 p.m.
Moonrise tomorrow	5:25 p.m.
Moonset tomorrow	3:17 a.m.

## MOON PHASES



## HUNTING/FISHING TIMES

	Peak AM	Peak PM
Today	8:24 - 10:24	8:50 - 10:50
Tomorrow	9:17 - 11:17	9:44 - 11:44
Thursday	10:12 - 12:12	10:41 - 12:41

For latest weather updates, please visit:  
[www.UpdatedWx.com/KTN](http://www.UpdatedWx.com/KTN)

# High court throws out La. abortion clinic limit

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — A divided Supreme Court on Monday struck down a Louisiana law regulating abortion clinics, reasserting a commitment to abortion rights over fierce opposition from dissenting conservative justices in the first big abortion case of the Trump era.

Chief Justice John Roberts and his four more liberal colleagues ruled that a law that requires doctors who perform abortions must have admitting privileges at nearby hospitals violates abortion rights the court first announced in the landmark Roe v. Wade decision in 1973.

The outcome is far from the last word on the decades-long fight over abortion with dozens of state-imposed restrictions winding their way through the courts. But the decision was a surprising defeat for abortion opponents, who thought that a new conservative majority with two of President Donald Trump's appointees on board would start chipping away at abortion access.

The key vote belonged to Roberts, who had always voted against abortion rights before, including in a 2016 case in which the court struck down a Texas law that was virtually identical to the one in Louisiana.

The chief justice explained that he continues to think the Texas case was wrongly decided, but believes it's important for the court to stand by its prior decisions.

"The result in this case is controlled by our decision four years ago invalidating a nearly identical Texas law," Roberts wrote. He did not join the opinion written by



Anti-abortion protesters wait outside the Supreme Court on Monday for a decision on a Louisiana case. Chief Justice John Roberts and his four more liberal colleagues ruled that a law that requires doctors who perform abortions must have admitting privileges at nearby hospitals violates abortion rights the court first announced in the landmark Roe v. Wade decision in 1973.

Justice Stephen Breyer for the other liberals in Monday's decision, and his position left abortion-rights supporters more relieved than elated.

The case was the third in two weeks in which Roberts, a George W. Bush appointee, joined the court's liberals in the majority. One of the earlier decisions preserved the legal protections and work authorization for 650,000 immigrants who were brought to the U.S. as children. The other extended federal employment-discrimination protections to LGBT Americans, a decision that Justice Neil Gorsuch also joined and wrote.

In dissent on Monday, Justice Clarence Thomas wrote, "Today a majority of the Court perpetuates its ill-founded abortion jurisprudence by enjoining a perfectly legitimate state law and doing so without jurisdiction."

Trump's two high-court picks, Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh, were in dissent, along with Samuel Alito.

The presence of the new justices is what had fueled hopes among abortion opponents that the Supreme Court would be more likely to uphold restrictions.

The Trump administration had sided with Louisiana in urging the court to uphold the law. White House Press Secretary Kayleigh McEnany criticized the decision. "In an unfortunate ruling today,

the Supreme Court devalued both the health of mothers and the lives of unborn children by gutting Louisiana's policy that required all abortion procedures be performed by individuals with admitting privileges at a nearby hospital," McEnany said.

Marjorie Dannenfelser, president of the anti-abortion Susan B. Anthony List, said, "Today's ruling is a bitter disappointment. It demonstrates once again the failure of the Supreme Court to allow the American people to protect the well-being of women from the tentacles of a brutal and profit-seeking abortion industry."

On the other side, support for the decision mixed with a wariness that the future of abortion rights appears to rest with Roberts.

Nancy Northup, president and CEO of the Center for Reproductive Rights, said Monday's decision by no means ends the struggle over abortion rights.

"We're relieved that the Louisiana law has been blocked today but we're concerned about tomorrow. With this win, the clinics in Louisiana can stay open to serve the 1 million women of reproductive age in the state. But the Court's decision could embolden states to pass even more restrictive laws when clarity is needed if abortion rights are to be protected," Northup said.

# GOP lawmakers urge action after briefing on Russia allegations

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Eight Republican lawmakers attended a White House briefing Monday about explosive allegations that Russia secretly offered bounties to Taliban-linked militants for killing American troops in Afghanistan — intelligence the president himself was said to have not been fully read in on.

Members of Congress in both parties called for additional information and consequences for Russia and its president, Vladimir Putin, even as White House press secretary Kayleigh McEnany insisted President Donald Trump had not been briefed on the findings because they hadn't been verified. Eight Democrats were to be briefed Tuesday morning.

The White House seemed to be setting an unusually high bar for bringing the information to Trump, since it is rare for intelligence to be confirmed without a shadow of doubt before it is presented to senior government decision-makers.

McEnany declined to say why a different standard of confidence in the intelligence applied to briefing lawmakers than bringing the information to the president.

Republicans who were in the briefing expressed alarm about Russia's activities in Afghanistan.

Rep. Michael McCaul, the ranking member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and Rep. Adam Kinzinger were in the briefing Monday led by Director of National Intelligence John Ratcliffe,

White House chief of staff Mark Meadows and National Security Adviser Robert O'Brien. McCaul and Kinzinger said in a statement that lawmakers were told "there is an ongoing review to determine the accuracy of these reports."

"If the intelligence review process verifies the reports, we strongly encourage the administration to take swift and serious action to hold the Putin regime accountable," they said.

Rep. Liz Cheney, R-Wyo., and Texas Rep. Mac Thornberry, the top Republican on the House Armed Services Committee, said, "After today's briefing with senior White House officials, we remain concerned about Russian activity in Afghanistan, including reports that they have targeted U.S. forces."

Senators were reviewing classified documents related to the allegations Monday evening. The information they received was not previously known, according to one aide who was not authorized to discuss the matter publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

On CNN, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi confirmed the timing of the Democratic briefing but said "it's no substitute for what they owe the Congress of the United States." She said "this is as serious as it gets."

She speculated that Trump wasn't briefed "because they know it makes him very unhappy, and all roads for him, as you know, lead to Putin. And would he tell Putin what they knew?"

# NORTON

From Page 1A

which has seen debris slide problems in the past few years.

While Project Intersection first envisioned in 2017 development of three sites between the highwall area and Hawthorne Drive, behind the Virginia-Kentucky Regional Shopping Center, LPRIFA Executive Director Duane Miller said planners soon realized that eliminating the highwall would provide two benefits: eliminating an unstable geographic feature and developing a fourth site.

Since the highwall was a leftover from surface mining in that area from the 1970s, Miller said, Abandoned Mine Land

Pilot Program funds administered by the Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy (DMME) could be applied to Project Intersection.

"DMME pilot money will help remove one of the most famous or infamous landmarks in the area, depending on how you look at it," said Miller.

After LPRIFA acquired the project land with a combined \$2.35 million in Pilot Program and state Tobacco Commission money, another \$1.58 million was allocated to the highwall removal. Even though the COVID-19 pandemic was slowing a lot of business activity in Southwest Virginia, preliminary work progressed.

By April, Old Dominion Power (ODP) had moved a

transmission line from atop the highwall. Contractors cleared trees and brush in April to avoid habitat impact issues with the Northern long-eared bat in that area, Ramey said.

Miller and LPRIFA Coordinator Craig Seaver each said that ODP and DMME have been a major help in getting near to demolition work.

"Without Old Dominion helping on the power lines, we couldn't have gotten this done as fast as we are now," Seaver said.

Glass Machinery and Excavation has started getting heavy machinery to the site, and project managers have done pre-blasting surveys of businesses and homes. Ramey said blasting permits are being obtained, and project

managers are working with the Virginia Department of Transportation on what impact blasting and excavation will have on U.S. 23 traffic this summer.

"We anticipate that daily blasts will be part of the process," Ramey said, adding that the safety and traffic plan will be announced soon.

Once removed, the highwall becomes site four in Project Intersection. Each of the sites will have utilities, road access from Hawthorne Drive and broadband infrastructure access, Miller said.

Another \$3.5 million in Abandoned Mine Land Pilot Program funds and more than \$900,000 in Appalachian Regional Commission money will go to preparing all four sites,

he added, and LPRIFA has applied for another \$1.4 million in AML funds.

Under Virginia law, regional industrial facilities authorities can develop projects such as Project

Intersection on a revenue sharing basis to benefit all localities in such an authority.

"DMME has really been wonderful to work with on this project," Miller said.

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