

The Franklin Daily

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2013

WWW.FRANKLINDAILY.COM

75 CENTS



Appalachian Power Co. Spending \$82.7 Million on Local Projects

By BRIAN KELLEY

Electricity should begin to flow this week to the new Lake Forest substation in Botetourt County, the first of four projects in the Roanoke region that Appalachian Power Co. says are designed to bolster its ability to meet increased demand and to improve reliability.

Appalachian will spend \$82.7 million by the time the projects are completed in 2014. The company then will file a transmission rider with the state to seek to have customers pay for the work, which likely will mean a 7 cent monthly increase for the typical residential

customer. That filing will be in addition to the base rate filings the company is required by law to file every two years.

For now, more than 700 people, both from the utility and hired contractors, are working or will work on the projects designed with two purposes in mind: carrying more electrical load, and building so-called “double contingency” reliability to meet updated national standards. That means if one high-voltage line goes down, a second will be available to carry its load.

“It’s just

unbelievable all the people who touch a project like this,” said Shawn Smith, project manager for the Matt Funk and Huntington Court reliability upgrades.

The work amounts to the most substantial physical improvements to the electrical system in the Roanoke area in the past two decades, said Paul Hanson, a senior engineer in asset planning who went to work for the utility in 1990.

“These aren’t projects you design overnight,” he said. Each has gone with affected property

Continued on Page 1B

Va. Woman, 29, Charged in Beating Death of Boyfriend, 77.

By DUNCAN ADAMS

A 29-year-old woman faces a first-degree murder charge in the beating death of her 77-year-old boyfriend in his Bedford County home.

A Bedford County grand jury returned the indictment Tuesday.

Kristina Pongracz previously had been charged with aggravated malicious wounding after a deputy from the Bedford County Sheriff’s Office found William Herchenrider bleeding profusely and on all fours May 4 at the large home Pongracz shared with him in Goodview.

Herchenrider survived but spent

months in the hospital and an acute-care facility recovering. Then, on Aug. 25, just hours after his return home, Herchenrider died while in hospice care, said Assistant Commonwealth’s Attorney Stephanie Ayers.

In Bedford County Circuit Court last month,



Kristina Pongracz, 29

Ayers told the court that state medical examiners released autopsy results in December that ruled that Herchenrider’s death was a homicide. Forensic evidence linked his death to complications that

Continued on Page 1B

Cellphone Use Increases Brain Activity

Study results renew calls for more research into the potential dangers of cell phones

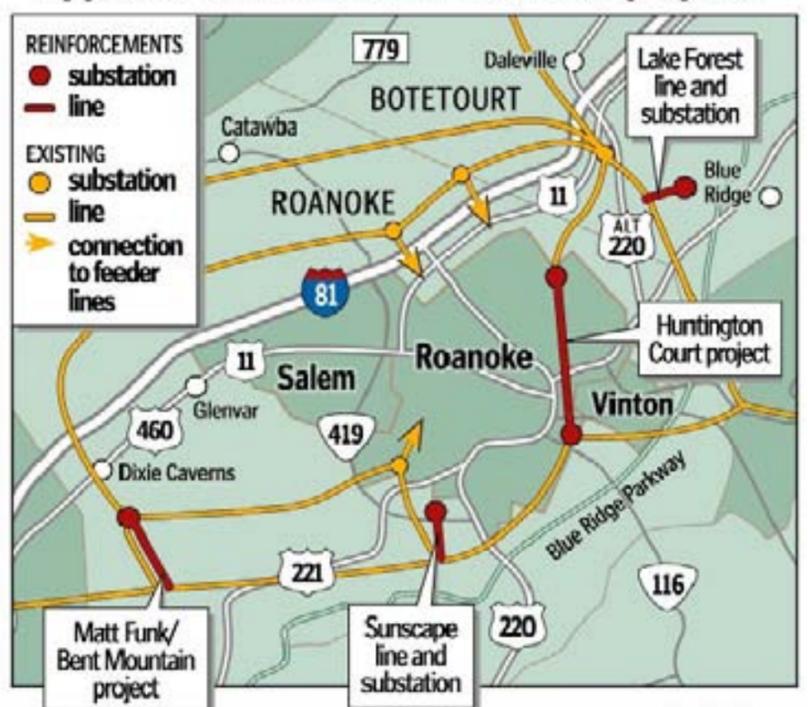
By MICHELLE SINHA

A new study has shown that cell phone use changes brain activity, once again raising the question of whether cell phone radiation can cause long-term brain damage.

Recent research revealed people holding a phone to their ear for 50-minute period saw an increase in brain glucose metabolism, according to a study in a recent issue of the Journal of the American Medical Association. Based on the study, conducted by the National Institutes of Health,

Continued on Page 1C

Appalachian Power reinforcement projects



State Legislators Adopt \$80 Billion Budget

By JULIAN WALKER

Millions in state funding that local school systems feared they would lose was preserved in the compromise state budget adopted Thursday evening.

The revised two-year spending plan features roughly \$75 million more for public education than the introduced budget.

It includes “hold

It includes “hold harmless” funding to help school divisions potentially hurt by declining local revenue and revisions to the local composite index, a complex formula that determines school funding based on measures of community wealth.

Gov. Bob McDonnell’s budget proposed using that money for other

priorities, a move that would have cost school systems in South Hampton Roads.

Enhanced education funding was among many revisions to the blended biennial budget negotiated by House of Delegates and Senate officials, who relied on revenue growth.

Continued on Page 6A



INSIDE SPORTS

Farewell to a Local Legend

PAGE 1D FOR MORE

INSIDE LOCAL NEWS

Franklin Facing Pothole Problems

PAGE 1B FOR MORE



Like what we’re doing? Comments or questions? Pay us a visit at www.franklindaily.com to give US the scoop! READ “The Daily, Bigger & Better” INSIDE on page 6A!

CLASS 6D
COMICS 2C
EDITORIALS 6A
LOCAL 1B
MOVIES 4C

OBITS 3B
SPORTS 1D
TECH NEWS 1C
TELEVISION 4C

