

**I welcome the opportunity to talk to you regarding your ideas and concerns. I can be reached by phone, mail or email.**

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## Don't Let Your Guard Down

It has been quite the year with COVID-19 dictating how we live, work, play and socialize.

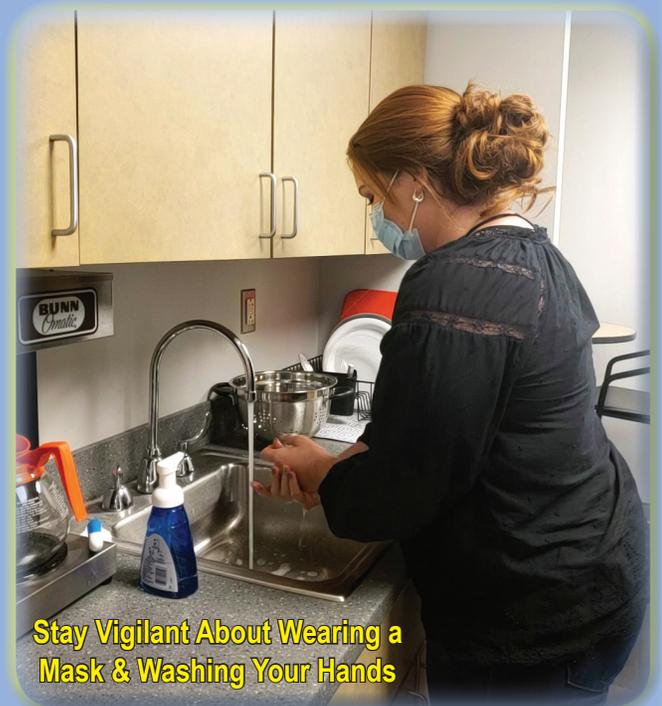
The first case of COVID-19 in Wythe County was confirmed on March 27, 2020. As we pass the one-year mark, I want to thank all citizens who worked hard to keep our numbers down. We all are trying to do our part with social distancing, wearing masks and hand washing. But, quite frankly, I'm tired of it all and I know you are as well.

It's been a confusing time. Should we wear one mask or two masks? Is social distancing six feet or three feet? How many people is considered a crowd? Who is in your pod? Eat in or use takeout? Go to church or not? There are many factors to consider with each decision we make.

Now is not the time to let our guard down. When the vaccinations ramped up in Wythe County, the number of new cases started to trend downward. Why would this occur? There are probably multi-factorial reasons. The concentration on testing may have shifted to vaccinations. There may have been fewer symptomatic cases or less spread of the virus.

Unfortunately, in March, the active cases for the county started to slowly rise daily. Why did this occur? My gut feeling is that after being dictated to for a year, we saw a light at the end of the tunnel and that gave us a false sense of security. We let our guard down. The current vaccination numbers in Wythe County are approximately 11.6 percent of the population, that is 3,401 people. As we enjoy Spring with the sun, warmth, and opportunities it brings, please remember to continue to wash your hands, mask up and go the distance.

We can get through this as a community if we all work together and do our part for a little while longer.



**Stay Vigilant About Wearing a Mask & Washing Your Hands**



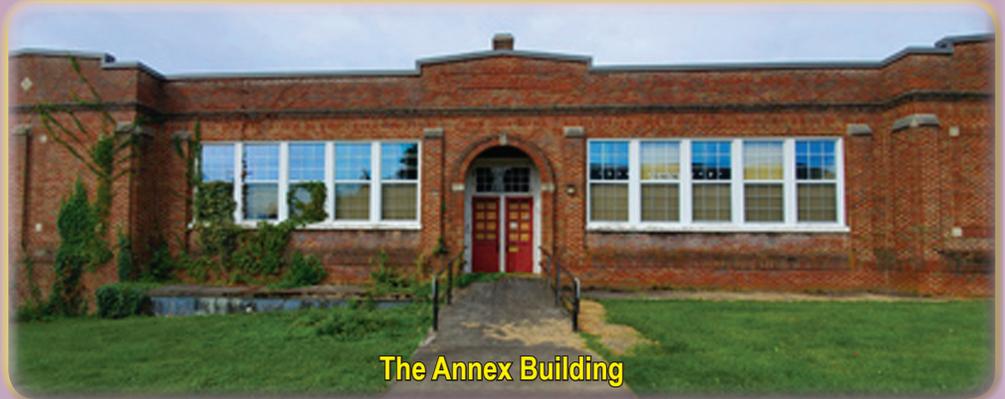
**Remember to Keep Social Distancing**

## The Annex Building

The building, now called the Spiller Annex, was built in 1927 on Tazewell Street as the Wytheville Elementary School. The two-story brick structure was part of the educational campus that included the Victorian-style high school. The building we now know as Spiller Elementary was erected in 1958. Several former teachers have shared their memories with us.

According to Mrs. Alice Moore, after the new school was constructed it was referred to as the elementary school and the Annex was referred to as "The Old Building." That continued for quite some time. She stated that during a formal school evaluation the "old building" needed a name and thus the label "Spiller Annex" was born. In 1960, Mrs. Moore, fresh out of college joined her mother Sue Blair as a teacher at the Wytheville Elementary School. She retired in 2000. She has such fond memories of having the opportunity to work in such a charming building with hardwood floors and a tin roof. Polly Miller started as a 4-H teacher around 1969 and she stated that it was called the Spiller Annex at that time. As an extension officer and teacher, they were able to have such wonderful projects with the students, from planting tree saplings to raising pigs (at home). Mrs. Patricia Smiley also has fond memories. She began

teaching at Spiller Elementary in 1987. She is embarrassed to say that for some time she had no clue that the Annex was an active part of Spiller Elementary School. She speaks highly regarding Ms. Sue Hardin who had multiple jobs at the school but loved being the crossing guard for the children to go back and forth across Tazewell Street. Another previous teacher recently heard from one of her



former students who shared a photo, taken in the Annex, of their fifth-grade class. It brought back fond memories for the teacher. The student conveyed that he was thankful for her and the whole experience of attending school in the Annex and that it was influential in his education going forward.

The Annex has been used for storage since around 2004. In 2019, the Annex was donated to the Wythe County Historical Society by the Wythe County Board of Supervisors.

The Wythe County Historical Society is committed to the collection, preservation and interpretation of Wythe County history, and seeks to educate through public programs. The Society partners with and supports the Town of Wytheville's Department of Museums to coordinate programs and make artifacts and archival materials accessible to the public. The Heritage Preservation Center houses the Society's documented history and research library. It is open to the public to do research. Check them out on their Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/wchswytheville>.

## Council Actions

### March 8, 2021:

- Accepted the revised Willow Brook Jackson/Umberger Homestead Museum Agreement amendment and approved the revisions to the Homestead Museum Advisory Board rules for transaction of business.
- Authorized Appalachian Power to remove certain trees on Withers Road and Church Street. The homeowners/business owners have given permission and will help select replacement trees.

### March 22, 2021:

- Held a public comment session to consider the designation of a revitalization area for the part of town bounded generally by the following: Calhoun Street to the East, Jefferson Street to the Southeast and 8th Street to the Northwest. Later in the meeting, Council approved the designation of the revitalized area.
- Council set a public hearing for April 12, 2021 to consider amending sections of zoning to add crematoriums as an ancillary use for funeral homes.
- Committee appointments by Council: Ms. Alma Watson to the Tree Advisory Committee, Mr. Bobby Angles to the Wytheville Development Authority, Ms. Melissa Crockett to the Wytheville Development Authority and Mrs. Patricia Mangus to the Willow Brook Jackson/Umberger Advisory Board.