SHEPHERDSTOWN

Vote of confidence:
The Shepherd University board of governors has given President Suzanne Shipley a vote of confidence.

The board’s public statement came after its triennial performance assessment on June 10.

“Shepherd University is fortunate to have such an effective leader as Dr. Suzanne Shipley who, in the board’s judgment, has proven herself as a steward of the university’s resources and a champion for fulfilling its mission,” said board Chairwoman Mary Clare Eros.

“The board is extremely appreciative of President Shipley’s distinguished service to the university and wishes to convey its continuing confidence in, and support of, her leadership.”

History walk: The Historic Preservation Program at Shepherd University is partnering with local agencies to provide historic living history walking tours in Shepherdstown. The program is scheduled to start July 7 and end Aug. 1.

Keith D. Alexander, coordinator of the Historic Preservation Program, said the tours will be held during the Contemporary American Theater Festival, which will take place July 9-Aug. 1 at Shepherd.

“We’re trying to educate not only town residents but people visiting from out of town,” Alexander said. “The focus will be on the history of the region.”
Shepherdstown theater festival celebrates 20 seasons

by Catella Mason

June 21, 2010 - Shepherdstown will soon be abuzz with theater lovers as the Contemporary American Theater Festival opens its 20th season next month.

The CATF was the dream of Founder and Producing Director Ed Herendeen.

"I guess the work has been validated, we've demonstrated we had a great idea to create a home for nurturing and developing the American playwright," Herendeen said.

Since that first season in 1991, CATF has produced 80 new American plays and 30 world premiers.

One goal is to give playwrights the opportunity to tweak their work during the Festival.

Herendeen said over the years he's enjoyed working with the playwrights.

"That's a thrill that can't be compared with," Herendeen said. "Which is great to produce classics and Shakespeare and dead playwrights but you can't compare it with how great it is to actually work with a playwright that's here and now and present."

Two of the five plays offered this year will be world premiers. CATF runs July 9-Aug. 1.
Shepherdstown festival premieres rock musical

By Cecelia Mason

June 22, 2010 - This year Contemporary American Theater Festival goers will get a taste of the New York music scene with The Eelwax Jesus 3-D Pop Music Show.

Eelwax Jesus is an alternative rock band founded ten years ago by actor Lee Selars and playwright Max Baker. The band plays at several New York venues and over time Baker has incorporated theatrical elements to the show.

"And often we've used projection screens, and we've had people trying to get out of a straight jacket during a song and we've had various elements of other people coming in," Baker said. "We have just then developed that side of it so it's more of a balance between the songs and the theater stuff that goes around it so we have these characters now."

Despite its bizarre sounding name the show does have a plot and offers a message about modern day society. It takes place in 2031 in any city in the United States.

"We sort of envisioned an Orwellian future where you can't go outside because of monkey pox and swine flu and all these things, very dangerous to go outside," Selars said. "People live in residential housing and have entertainment piped into them through the national network TV station."

Selars said the TV station The Eelwax Jesus 3D Pop Music show with host Mr. Shine Eelwax Jesus is the band that performs.

"It's our version of what the world might look like if we're not careful, and some of our opinions on consumerism, politics, what may happen in the future if we're not careful," Selars said.

Over the years CATF has allowed playwrights to see their new works on stage for the first time and hone them. Baker says this is a rare opportunity in the theater world and one he's looking forward to.

"For us it's a dream, it's fantastic and we really get to try out what this may be," Baker said. "I think of it as spaghetti test, just throwing it up on the stage and see what sticks, which is extraordinary."

"I think it was the other day I said that it's starting out as a spaghetti test and it will end up as a Rorschach test so that the audience will see what they want to in it rather than us saying this is what it's about," Baker said.

The Contemporary American Theater Festival runs July 9 to August 1.
Two playwrights stage diverse impressions of war at W.Va. festival

By Jane Horwitz
Wednesday, June 23, 2010; C02

Psychological and cultural fallout from U.S. adventures in Afghanistan and Iraq fuel two very different plays at this summer's Contemporary American Theater Festival in Shepherdstown, W.Va., which runs July 9 through Aug. 1.

In "Lidless," by Frances Ya-Chu Cowhig, an army veteran named Alice, who worked as an interrogator at Guantanamo, tries to forget the way superiors ordered her to use feminine wiles to humiliate and abuse Muslim prisoners. Most of the action is set in the near future, when Alice, now married and a mom, runs a florist shop in Minnesota.

One day, a former prisoner, Bashir, walks in, demands that she remember him and, as an act of contrition, donate part of her liver to save his life. The memories come flooding back, causing an earthquake for Alice, her husband and their impressionable teenage daughter.

Cowhig says that other plays about victims confronting their torturers portray male oppressors. Using the United States' post-9/11 wars and the idea of female interrogators and torturers, she says, "seemed very historically different . . . I became very interested in what . . . a reunion between them could be like."

Speaking by phone from Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan province in China, where her parents work at the U.S. consulate, Cowhig, who spent many childhood years in the Washington area, said her research showed her that interrogators are smart people able to detach themselves from unpleasant realities. They "could have just as easily gone into the Peace Corps," Cowhig said. "I could have easily gone that route. . . . Alice and me, we're both of a generation that has grown up on video games, and it's very easy to kind of detach from what's going on."

"Lidless" was Cowhig's graduate thesis at the James A. Michener Center for Writers at the University of Texas at Austin. It will be produced at the Edinburgh Festival in August and in Philadelphia in January.

Michele Lowe's "Inana" takes another tack. An Iraqi museum curator, Yasin, spirits an ancient statue of Inana, goddess of war, out of Iraq to London, just before the American bombing started in 2003. While in London waiting to make contact with someone from the British Museum, he tries to reassure his new young wife after their arranged marriage. She thinks they're in London on a sort of

Continued on the next page
honeymoon and working vacation. Yasin must break it to her that they're not going back to Iraq. So the play becomes a kind of international thriller about art and art forgery, and a tentative love story.

Speaking from her home in the Bronx, Lowe (her "The Smell of the Kill" was done at Round House Theatre and on Broadway in the early 2000s) said she adores digging up information. "I was always intrigued by the idea that the Nazis had stolen the art from Jewish dealers, Jewish artists. . . . That idea of stolen art was something that I had been researching forever."

The Long Island-bred playwright, who said she's been burglarized twice, thinks those experiences "brought home to me how we give value to objects in an emotional way . . . much like the statue of Inana." She took that idea and melded it to current events and research.

"When we invaded Iraq and the looting occurred, I realized that I could take my feelings about the war and give my feelings words in this story about a man who is trying to protect not just his country's legacy, but the world's legacy."

"Inana" was commissioned by the Denver Center Theatre. This will be its second production.
Shepherdstown Theater Festival Offers Taste of ‘Eelwax Jesus’

By CHRISTINE MILLER FORB
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SHEPHERDSTOWN — Less than three weeks before the Contemporary American Theater Festival hosts the world premiere of "The Eelwax Jesus: 3-D Pop Music Show," no one seems to be fully sum up the 89-minute production.

Describing it is tough even for those who have the chance to listen to Lee Sellars and his band perform 10 songs from the all-rock musical on June 14 in the courtyard of the Enter Hotel in Shepherdstown.

It’s even a challenge for Sellars, who composed the music for the show, and London-born actor and playwright Max Baker, who wrote the lyrics.

"I heard someone say it’s a cross between ‘Rocky Horror Picture Show’ and ‘One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest,’" Sellars said, "that might capture it," Max Baker, who has acted in dozens of CATF shows since the festival’s launch in 1990.

"Eelwax Jesus" also has been called a blending of David Bowie, 1960s indie band The Breeders and postmodern author William S. Burroughs.

"There’s maybe some Monty Python in there too," Baker said.

The show’s evolution dates to 1992, when Sellars and Baker were actors working out of Chicago. Or not working out of Chicago.

"We were both unemployed for stretches," Baker said. "We started hanging out, talking about music and then jamming. Then we started writing songs together."

Once the pair began to perform in clubs in Chicago and New York, friends and audience members noticed the songs embodied a certain theatrical flair.

"Obviously, what we love about acting is tie into our music," Baker recalled.

For example, one of their shows featured a woman on stage throwing throughout the set. "The audience loved that," said Baker, who added that soon other friends and fans were suggesting various ideas to make the performances richer and more eclectic.

"We had someone volunteer to get tied into a straightjacket and flight his way out during a song," Baker said. "And it was amazing to have his thrashing about on stage, but we couldn’t let him keep doing it. He has to dislocate his shoulder every time, and it’s something his doctors said he absolutely cannot do more than once a month."

Last year, Sellars and Baker decided to pitch the idea of a full-scale musical to CATF founder Ed Herendeen, who immediately reconceived "Eelwax Jesus" as a perfect fit for the festival.

"You’re watching and wondering if it’s performance art or a musical or performance theater or just what it is," he said. "It’s hard to describe, but as a festival that’s focused on the contemporary, this is what we seek — a new form, a new style, a new way of communicating."

The setting for the show is in a group Rome in a major U.S. city. It takes place in the future, when a swine flu outbreak and other calamities have forced people to stay indoors, Baker said.

By putting on stage not only character actors but video displays to show film, a band armed with provocative lyrics and powerful, funky tunes, a one-of-a-kind tap dance number and even a master giveaway: "Eelwax Jesus" delivers a wholly different experience, Herendeen said.

"It’s a theatrical event, no question," he said.

By CHRISTINE MILLER FORB / The State Journal
Lee Sellars performs with his band Eelwax Jesus on the balcony of the Enter Hotel in Shepherdstown June 14 during a sneak preview of his Contemporary American Theater Festival’s rock musical, "The Eelwax Jesus: 3-D Pop Music Show," The production opens July 7 at Shepherd University’s Frank Center Theater.
Shepherd's Fundraising Goal: $20 Million by 2012

By CHRISTINE MILLER FORD
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SHEPHERDSTOWN — As Shepherd University works to raise $20 million for sports programs by 2012, more than 5,000 graduates and supporters already have chipped in — some modestly and some with millions.

"People across the board are contributing, not just the wealthy," said Diane Molby, the school's vice president for advancement. "We have so many people who recognize what Shepherd is doing, and if they can help, they're stepping forward."

The school's Create campaign began four years ago, according to Monica Lingenfelter, executive vice president of the Shepherd University Foundation.

She said this is the university's first major comprehensive fundraising drive.

"When we ended the quiet phase of our fundraising work, we were actually at $18 million, and now that we're beginning the public phase, we feel very confident of reaching our goal," Lingenfelter said.

"We're seeing a great response. People in the Eastern Panhandle and beyond understand our need, and they're responding."

The economic downturn hasn't kept supporters from giving, Molby said.

"Maybe because of what's happening with the recession, our supporters understand the value of education," she said.

"They know parents are losing jobs and that it's going to be a struggle for some students to stay in school. If they're in a position where they can help, they want to."

Lingenfelter said the money raised will allow Shepherd to offer more athletic scholarships, upgrade the football field and other facilities, boost academic support to students, endow additional faculty positions and meet other needs.

"The dollars coming to us from the state are decreasing, but we're adding programs, adding enrollment, and it's clear we need help beyond what we can rely on from the state," she said.

"One major contribution to the school will allow Shepherd to award another 24 full annual athletic scholarships," Lingenfelter said.

That gift — which totals $2.5 million — comes from a trust set up decades ago by the late James "Hank" Moler and his wife, Katharine Moler, both Shepherd alumni and influential educators.

"They were larger-than-life figures at Shepherd for decades," Lingenfelter said.

James Moler was a founding father of the Shepherd Foundation in 1943, a Shepherd professor, community leader and state legislator. Lingenfelter said, while his wife taught in Berkeley and Jefferson counties for 40 years.

"The endowment will allow us to offer this help to 24 deserving West Virginians every year," she said. "And that's something we'll be able to do forever — it's just incredible the impact a gift like this has."

Shepherd University's Create campaign began four years ago to raise $20 million for sports programs by 2012.
Local student to attend SURE Program

Shepherdstown Resident Accepted in WVU SURE Program

Benjamin Jesse Biggs Sade was accepted in the WVU SURE Program for Summer 2010. SURE is WVU's Honors College Summer Undergraduate Research Experience. The program is designed to provide laboratory experience for promising undergraduate students with interest in careers in science. This is Ben's second year in the SURE Program. Students in the SURE Program complete an 8-week investigation under the supervision of their faculty advisor. Ben is working on extracting biofuel from algae in the laboratory of Dr. Alan Secotone in the Division of Plant and Soil Sciences. All the students prepare a summary and poster of their work, which will be presented in The Mountain Lair at the end of the program.

Ben is the son of Shepherdstown resident Dr. Alan Biggs, Professor of Plant Pathology at WVU's Tree Fruit Research and Education Center. In the fall, Ben will be a junior in Shepherd University's Biology Department.

Benjamin Jesse Biggs Sade works Dr. Alan Secotone's laboratory in the Division of Plant and Soil Sciences.
W. Va. school reforms on hold for now

The Doyle Report

By Delegate John Doyle

On May 20, after a seven-day special session that produced precious little in the way of education reform, the Legislature adjourned and appointed a "working group" to come up with changes in state law that might position West Virginia to win money from "Race To The Top." Gov. Joe Manchin said at the time that he had spoken with Arne Duncan, US Secretary of Education, and Duncan had told him there might be a third round of awards under that federal program, which hopes to motivate states to innovate in K-12 education. As the deadline (June 1) for applying for second round awards was fast approaching, the governor and legislative leaders concluded that we would not be able to agree on reforms soon enough to submit for Round #2. We had applied for Round #1, but failed miserably.

The working group consists of five senators and five delegates. In short order it came to be affectionately called the "Gang of Ten." Governor Manchin said he hoped enough progress would be made to enable him to call the Legislature back into session on June 7, the beginning of the June Interim Meetings (when we'd all be in Charleston anyway).

The Legislature has regularly scheduled interim meetings each month. They always last three days and are almost always in Charleston. We can't take any official action, and neither the House of Delegates nor the Senate meets as a body. We discuss dozens of pre-assigned topics in committees that are usually made up of both senators and delegates with the idea of getting a "head start" on the regular session.

The Gang of Ten made little progress between May 20 and June 1, so the governor decided to not call us back into session. He now hopes we can resume action on July 19, the first day of the July Interims. Meanwhile, the Gang has been meeting regularly and has now approved seven bills for recommendation to the Legislature. Only one is controversial.

That would be a recommendation for a limited charter school program. Senators in the Gang voted for it 5-0, but delegates barely passed it, 5-2. To be recommended to the full Legislature a bill must have a majority from each house's working group membership. All the other bills passed with unanimous votes from each house's Gang membership.

One of the 2 "no" votes on charter schools was from the chair of the House Education Committee. That committee had killed all charter school bills and all teacher evaluation bills during the special session. Most folks think it will kill this charter school bill, if we go back into session.

Meanwhile, this focus on Race To The Top has interfered with the efforts of Jefferson County's legislative delegation to increase the percentage of locally raised K-12 school funds that do not displace money from the state-aid formula. We were able to raise that percentage from 2 percent to 10 percent between 2006 and 2008. It began the 2009 regular session with high hopes we could increase it some more by now. No such luck. So, for every dollar raised locally for K-12 public schools, the state still reduces the state-aid formula by 90 cents.

School districts in West Virginia coincide with county boundaries, but have no connection whatsoever with county government. Jefferson County Schools is a local government entirely separate from county government, but which owns identical geography.

In addition to the school-aid formula, we must deal with the "10 percent" law. That law says that the average salary of the five school districts with the highest average salaries (the "average of the average," I call it) may be no more than 10 percent greater than the average salary in the district with the lowest average salary. Housing costs in Jefferson County are twice those of most areas of our state. Without major modification of the 10 percent law it would be impossible to pitch salaries high enough to keep teachers from leaving for higher pay in neighboring states, even if we were to have the money to do so.

The 10 percent law was the Legislature's reaction to a 1982 court decision that declared West Virginia's school funding formula unconstitutional. Judge Arthur Recht said (in what became known as the "Recht Decision") that dollar-per-student funding had to be equal all over the state.

However, in a subsequent case (heard after the passage of the 10 percent law), the same judge ruled that "equal educational outcome" was the proper standard, not "equal dollars." We can now safely repeal (or at least seriously relax) the 10 percent law without going afoul of the courts. We just haven't yet been able to persuade our fellow legislators from other parts of the state to go along.

West Virginia's K-12 public school operation is the second most highly centralized of any state in the union. Only Hawaii, with it's one statewide school district, is more centralized. I'm convinced that West Virginia would be much better off if our school districts had more control over funding and education policy. I've been fighting for more local control in our public schools for years.

-- Delegate John Doyle, D-Jefferson, represents the 5th District in the West Virginia House of Delegates.
Shepherd University

June 26, 2010

Shepherd U theater festival to open its 20th season

By Staff reports,
The Charleston Gazette

SHEPHERDSTOWN, W.Va. -- The Contemporary American Theater Festival at Shepherd University opens for its 20th season on July 9.

The lineup consists of five plays, including two world premieres. The season features the plays in a rotating repertory through Aug. 1.

"Being in our 20th year, it is tempting to look back at our history, but this is net who we are," festival founder and producing director Ed Herendeen said in a news release. "Theater people are always looking forward. My eyes are focused on our 2010 festival through which our audience will witness the collision of stories, styles and voices that will lead us to a better understanding of ourselves as we attempt to navigate our future."

The featured plays are:

"The Eelwax Jesus 3-D Pop Music Show," a world premiere by Max Baker and Lee Sellers. Enter a socially isolated group home where the hapless residents are fed a daily dose of Eelwax Jesus hosted by the charismatic Mr. Shine. But this nationally controlled broadcast show may not be enough to protect them from an outside world plagued with superbugs, human cloning experiments, cameras in the sky and a suspiciously miserable old man who lives down the hall.

The show combines original toe-tapping pop songs with offbeat characters and a variety of kitsch imagery.

"Inana" by Michael Lowe. On the eve of the U.S. invasion of Baghdad, one man, an Iraqi museum curator, plots to save the statue of Inana, goddess of war, from destruction by the invaders. Fleeing to London with his young bride, he makes a life-altering deal to ensure the statue's preservation.

"Lilless," a first production by Frances Ya-Chu Cowhig. Fifteen years after being released from Guantanamo Bay, Bashir walks into the shop of Alice, his former U.S. interrogator. He's tracked Alice down and wants her to know the emotional and spiritual pain she inflicted upon him. The play is described as a portrayal of one woman's experience with the War on Terror and her struggle to find peace and healing.

"Breadcrumbs," a world premiere by Jennifer Haley. Alida is a reclusive writer of fiction slowly losing her memories. Reluctantly, she has come to depend upon a young caregiver to complete her final book -- an autobiography. Delving into the dark woods of her past, the women wrestle over the nature of language, loneliness and the essential self.

"White People," by J.T. Rogers. Three ordinary Americans spotlighted during extraordinary moments in their lives. Martin, a high-powered lawyer in St. Louis; Mara Lyna, a housewife in Fayetteville, N.C.; and Alan, a young professor in New York City, wrestle with guilt, prejudice and the price they and their children must pay for their actions. The play is "a candid, brutally honest exploration of race and language in our culture," according to a news release.

Single ticket prices begin at $25. Subscriber CATCards are available to see four or all five plays at discounted prices.

Since 1991, the Contemporary American Theater Festival at Shepherd University has produced 80 new plays, including 30 world premieres. For more information, visit www.catf.org or call 304-876-3473 or 800-999-2283.
Byrd’s legacy lives on in West Virginia

By MATTHEW UMSTEAD
matthewu@herald-mail.com

- Byrd, Senate’s elder statesman, dies at 92
- ‘Someone will fill the seat, but they won’t replace him’
- Senator Robert C. Byrd slide show
- Manchin won’t appoint himself to fill vacancy
- Pork or progress? Either way, Byrd changed W.Va.
- Testimonials to Sen. Byrd

MARTINSBURG, W.VA. — Examples of U.S. Sen. Robert C. Byrd’s power to steer billions in federal money to West Virginia are hard to miss in the Eastern Panhandle, where he helped bring 10 federal facilities that employ more than 3,200 people and channeled more than $175 million for road construction.

And community leaders said Monday that the fruits of the powerful Democratic lawmaker’s labor in Washington will leave a lasting impact in the region for years to come.

“Words cannot describe what he’s done for the City of Martinsburg and Berkeley County,” Martinsburg Mayor George Karos said Monday morning, hours after Byrd, 92, died at a Fairfax, Va., hospital.

Karos pointed to Byrd’s instrumental efforts in netting $23 million for the Raleigh Street Extension, noting the senator’s work to reallocate money that originally was earmarked for a bypass around Martinsburg for W.Va. 9.

Talked about for years, construction of the 1.2-mile extension of North Raleigh Street — from Race Street to Edwin Miller Boulevard — is about to begin as new four-lane sections of new W.Va. 9, another Byrd project, are nearing completion.

Ongoing improvements to W.Va. 9 have been spurred forward to the tune of more than $156 million secured by Byrd over the years, according to his office.

Byrd helped bring 10 federal facilities to Berkeley and Jefferson counties that employ more than 3,200 workers, according to a summary of “some of Sen. Byrd’s efforts in the Eastern Panhandle” that the senator’s office released Monday upon request.

Without Byrd’s intervention and ability to get federal support, the West Virginia Air National Guard base at Eastern West Virginia Regional Airport might have been lost, said Rick Wachtel, who has served on the airport’s governing board for more 25 years.

Byrd secured about $280 million for conversion of the Guard’s 167th Airlift Wing from a C-130 aircraft unit to a C-5 unit in a series of appropriations over a multiple-year period.

“That base is going to be there many, many decades because of Sen. Byrd’s work,” said Wachtel, who also noted the senator’s appropriation of more than $20 million for the airport’s radar system in the early 1990s.

Former Shepherd University president David Dunlop said Byrd’s support for a new nursing school building ($10 million), science and technology center ($9 million) and expansion of Scarborough Library ($13 million)
and the Robert C. Byrd Center for Legislative Studies, which houses the senator’s papers, have been key to the school’s growth in recent years.

Having scholars come to the college to research Byrd’s work, “I think is very significant,” Dunlop said in a phone interview.

In a school news release Monday, Byrd also was remembered for giving the inaugural Constitution Day address at the school in September 2005.

Byrd, in federal legislation that year, inserted language that required educational institutions receiving federal funds to hold an educational program for their students on the U.S. Constitution on Sept. 17.

The Robert C. Byrd Center for Legislative Studies opened its rotunda Monday for the campus community and the general public to sign a book of condolences and comment on his career. The book will be kept as a permanent part of his archive. The rotunda will be open from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. through Friday.

"Much of the University's recent expansion was due to federal funding requested by former President David Dunlop and obtained by Senator Byrd," current Shepherd president Suzanne Shipley said. "His career made a lasting impact on Shepherd, as it did on the state and nation. We will miss him."

Beyond his ability to secure millions in federal funding, Byrd was credited for staying in touch with community leaders who say he had a sharp memory and was quick to respond to them.

Wachtel recalled a meeting in Washington where he said Byrd listened to 10 or 12 speakers tell the senator about their issues and after listening to all of them, he addressed each person by name and quoted portions of each of their presentations in his response.

It was "an amazing display" of intellect and memory that Wachtel said he wouldn't forget.

Karos said Byrd always was quick to respond to his concerns and most recently wrote him a letter encouraging the mayor to strive and do what he thinks is right for city residents.

"He was very dedicated to the Eastern Panhandle, as well as the state of West Virginia," Karos said.

Former Morgan County Republican Del. Charles Trump IV agreed, describing Byrd as a “tireless worker” who was responsive, even if wasn’t always “the answer I wanted.”

"His legacy for West Virginia is enormous. It really is," Trump said.
In depressed W.Va. coal town, Byrd's impact felt everywhere

By Philip Rucker
Washington Post Staff Writer
Monday, June 28, 2010; 12:25 PM

WILLIAMSON, W.VA. -- There is no bronze statue of the great senator here. No historical plaque bearing his name. Here, in the secluded heart of West Virginia's coal country, the only monument to Robert C. Byrd lies on a creaky bookshelf, deep inside the Mingo County Clerk's Office.

Stacked in no particular order are white plastic election books whose green-edged pages of vote tallies tell the story of one man's lifelong dominance of West Virginia politics. In this conservative county of 28,000 people, where voters overwhelmingly backed Republican John McCain over President Obama, loyalty to Byrd -- a Democrat -- remained strong.

"There will never be nobody as good as Senator Byrd," Mingo County commissioner David Baisden said as he drove his Jeep up a mountain road to the coal mine where he works as a part-time dispatcher. "He was an icon. They'd almost have to shut the mines down if he was coming because people would come to see Senator Byrd."

Across West Virginia, Byrd solidified his political support not only by natural charisma -- he was known to campaign with a fiddle -- but also by bringing a bonanza of federal spending projects to his impoverished state. Long known as a champion of pork, Byrd in 51 years in the Senate (and decades on the Appropriations Committee, which he once chaired) funneled billions of dollars to West Virginia.

"People accuse him of pork-bellying it all over here. But it was a positive thing. And he never showed any partiality to any part of the state," said John Fanary, who runs a hair salon in Byrd's home town of Sophia.

As Byrd said during a 2001 Senate floor debate: "One man's pork is another man's job. Pork has been good investment in West Virginia. You can look around and see what I've done."

The senator often remarked that when he was first elected to the West Virginia House of Delegates in 1946, the state had just four miles of divided highway. Today, highways cross some 37,000 miles.

"Twenty-five years ago, we were an isolated community, and that made it very difficult to get out of," said Michael Thornbury, 53, a circuit judge here who was born and raised in Mingo County. "Has there been pork brought back to West Virginia? Yes. Has it been a long time coming? Absolutely.
We're only halfway caught up now. And it has not been wasteful pork. It has been pork that has revitalized our economy."

In return for Byrd's largesse, the state named more than 30 buildings, roads, schools and monuments in his honor. There's the Robert C. Byrd Highway, the Robert C. Byrd Expressway and the Robert C. Byrd Freeway. There's the Robert C. Byrd Institute for Advanced Flexible Manufacturing, the Robert C. Byrd Health Sciences Center and the Robert C. Byrd Cancer Research Center.

In the State Capitol Rotunda in Charleston, there is even a bronze statue of the senator. If you stand beneath it, Byrd's hand points at your pockets.

"Everywhere you go in this state, every institution of higher education, every federal entity in this state have his stamp on them, whether they're named for him or not," said Raymond W. Smock, director of the Byrd Center at Shepherd University in Shepherdstown.

Unlike elsewhere in the state, Williamson -- an old coal-mining town on the state's southwestern edge bordering Kentucky -- has nothing named in Byrd's honor. "There are no monuments to Robert C. Byrd here, but it's been silent appreciation," Thornsby said.

"We've lost one of the greatest icons that West Virginia ever had," Baisden said. "But we've all got to die and leave this world."

Byrd's impact is felt across Mingo County and here in the county seat. Folks here describe themselves as salt-of-the-earth people -- and nobody, they say, has represented them as Byrd did.

Mingo County was among the state's more prosperous places, with families earning a good living on farms and in coal and rail yards. But a major flood in 1977 ravaged Williamson, and the place has never been the same. The mountainous county is now one of West Virginia's most desolate outposts, with a median household income of about $21,000 that makes it among the nation's most impoverished areas.

"This is as depressed as I've ever seen," said longtime resident Stephanie Harvit, who runs a wine shop and small hotel downtown. "But Bob Byrd didn't want it to be that way. He tried with every bone in his body. . . . Everybody knew that he was going to do us right. He never disappointed Mingo County."

Like so many rural and poor pockets of the state, Williamson is the kind of place Byrd remembered when he accumulated power in Washington. In the 1980s, he helped build Route 119, a four-lane federal highway connecting Williamson and Charleston. Suddenly, the commute from the mountains to the state's political center was drastically reduced.

When the highway opened in 1987, residents recalled, Byrd proudly spoke for 90 minutes at the groundbreaking ceremony.

"This infrastructure was got by a guy who dedicated his life to the state of West Virginia," Baisden said. "We felt like he was something special because he would come here. Sometimes in his speeches, he would call Mingo County home."

Continued on the next page
Gary Stepp, a local pilot and bail bondsman, took a reporter up in his two-seat Cessna Skyhawk to show what Byrd's federal pork has brought to Mingo County. As the morning fog rolled across the valley, a new highway and high school were under construction and a mountain-top mining site was being transformed into a golf course.

Then, Stepp echoed the worries of Williamson: that with Byrd gone, the county might be cut off.

Stepp said he once assumed Byrd would end up in the White House someday.

"I thought he'd shoot for the presidency," Stepp said. "I really did think he would. Just think of how many years he's been in public life. Ain't nobody gonna ever do it again."
Festival Brings New Dramas To Shenandoah Valley

by ELIZABETH BLAIR

June 28, 2010

For 20 years, brand new plays have found a home — and a loyal audience — in West Virginia's oldest town.

The Contemporary American Theater Festival at Shepherd University in Shepherdstown is a dream for the writers of those plays. Over the years, both up-and-coming playwrights and big names — like Sam Shepard and Joyce Carol Oates — have premiered works there. That's in large part due to the festival's hard-working founder, Ed Herendeen.

One of the plays at this year's festival is called Inana, named for the goddess of sex and war. Inana is about many things. It's about stolen art.

It's a love story set in the context of war. In the play, an Iraqi curator leaves his country for London, with four mysterious suitcases and his new wife from an arranged marriage. One critic called Inana an "international thriller."

Herendeen says it's exactly the kind of play he looks for.

"Here is a play where we're looking at Iraqi people in a positive light. These are not terrorists. They're not going to bomb anybody. These are people who love their culture and are desperate to preserve it in a time when they're being invaded by another country," Herendeen says.

The 'Mission'

Herendeen founded the festival 20 years ago in partnership with Shepherd University. That first season they did three plays and sold about 2,000 tickets. Today, they do five professional plays and sell more than 11,000 tickets.

It's a big tourist draw. It helps that Shepherdstown is in the Shenandoah Valley. What's unusual about the festival is that Herendeen says he's never tempted to do a popular play in order to draw more people.

"The audience we've developed really is expecting us to do new plays. So because we never veered from a mission since day one, we are known for doing adventurous new work," he says.

Herendeen says on average he reads about 75 scripts a year. He also scopes out new plays that other regional theaters are doing. He first saw a reading of Inana two years ago at the Denver Center Theatre.

Continued on the next page
And this is something else about Herendeen: He doesn't suffer from what he refers to as "world premiere-itis" because that can hurt living playwrights.

"One of the things I've learned over the years, especially working with writers, that it's very difficult to get the first production, but writers tell me it's even more difficult to get production number two," Herendeen says. "In other words, once your play has had its world premiere, lots of theaters don't want to do it because it's been done. And then how does your play move on? How does your play have life beyond the world premiere?"

_Inana_ playwright Michele Lowe is comforted by Herendeen's approach.

"That's a wonderful thing for a playwright to hear," Lowe says. "A theater's really taking a chance on this. Here's an artistic director who's going to make it work."

This is not to say Herendeen shies away from world premieres altogether. He says he too likes the buzz you get from being first. This year the festival is doing two world premieres. One of them could almost be called a musical.

"I cannot tell you the excitement and the buzz and the fear that we have — it's good fear — producing the 'Eelwax Jesus 3-D Pop Music Show,'" Herendeen says.

This play is set in some kind of group home somewhere in the United States, and everyone who lives there is addicted to a TV show called _Eelwax Jesus_. It was co-written by Max Baker.

"It's set slightly in the future where going outside is extremely dangerous because of the swine flu in the air, all the monkey pox, the air is being turned into toxic fumes. So everyone's stuck inside. And they're fed this entertainment. But the entertainment systems are so advanced it's as real as I'm sitting here," Baker says.

'The Thing About Theater People'

Baker and his co-writer, Lee Sellars, are also actors, based in New York. Sellars has been playing Officer Krupke in _West Side Story_ on Broadway for the past couple of years. He's a Shepherdstown regular — acting in plays at the festival for about nine years.

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When asked if he's surprised the festival has lasted for two decades doing such edgy, unfamiliar work, he said: "Yes and no. It does surprise me in the real business world how would you do it. But then you meet Ed [Herendeen] and the people he's surrounded himself with — the creative team, the artists — and then it doesn't surprise you. It's like, 'Of course this is going well,' because he single-handedly refuses to let it fail."

But ask Herendeen the same question and he'll say it's because they have a great partnership with Shepherd University, that they have an engaged board of directors and that they're in a state — West Virginia — that's friendly to the arts. Herendeen doesn't get sentimental about the past.

"The thing about theater people is, we do a production, we spend all this time creating a play and then we take the set down — we strike the set — and I'm already thinking about next season," Herendeen says. "Because theater's not permanent. It lives in the moment. So I'm more interested in talking about the next 20 years in many ways."

In other words, there is still a lot of work to do. The 20th Contemporary American Theater Festival runs for three weeks beginning July 9.
Sen. Byrd continued to serve the Mountain State until the end

BY NAOMI SMOOT
JOURNAL CHARLES TOWN WRITER

CEARLES TOWN — At 92, his pace may have slowed, but his commitment to West Virginia never waned.

Friday, just three days before his passing, U.S. Sen. Robert C. Byrd, D-W.Va., joined other federal lawmakers in announcing additional money that had been made available for families struggling in the midst of an ailing economy.

"This funding will help to complement my ongoing efforts to help diversify West Virginia's economy, and to harness the industries of the future," Byrd stated in the June 25 press release.

In the statement, Byrd and other federal lawmakers from West Virginia lauded the fact that additional $490,993 in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds were heading to West Virginia. The newest round of money from the bill is slated to help workers learn new skills so they can get back to work.

Byrd had voted in favor of the Recovery Act when it came before lawmakers, making it one of thousands of pieces of legislation on which he had a say.

Byrd's time in the Senate spanned nearly 51 years, during which time he cast a total of 18,693 roll-call votes, more than any other person in the Senate's history.

That, coupled with the six years Byrd spent in the U.S. House of Representatives, led to him being the longest-serving congressman in history.

The aging lawmaker, who was affectionately known as 'Big Daddy' for his efforts on behalf of the state, had been in and out of the hospital numerous times in recent years, though. As a result, his speeches and appearances on the Senate floor had grown less frequent; however, supporters say that never stopped him from working to champion the interests of the state he loved.

Byrd's final roll-call vote came on June 17, 11 days before his death, when he voted with the majority to reject an amendment to the American Workers, State and Business Relief Act.

In recent months, Byrd also had cast votes on key legislation aimed at reforming the nation's health care system. He put pressure on big coal companies in the wake of April's mining disaster, and took a stand during debates on the military's controversial "Don't Ask Don't Tell" policy.

His overall voting and attendance record stood at 97 percent, but his participation had dwindled this year as his health continued to decline. In June, records show he participated in two of 24 roll-call votes. In May, he voted in 13 roll-call votes and was listed as not voting in 36. In April, he voted in 16 roll-call votes and was listed as not voting in eight. While in March, he voted in 31 roll-call votes and was listed as not voting in 49.

Nonetheless, reports show that the senator could be counted on to help his party when votes on controversial legislation were near, and with his passing, some pundits were questioning the fate of bills on which Byrd's vote could have been key. Specifically, questions arose over what Byrd's death could mean for a financial reform package aimed at protecting borrowers, among other things.

Friends and fellow West Virginians, meanwhile, spent Monday thinking about all that Byrd had managed to accomplish.

"I don't think there's anybody in Washington — either in the legislative, judicial or executive branch — who had more respect for our Constitution or our way of government," said Clarence "Clem" Martin, a legal advocate and friend of Byrd's. "Martin is just one of many constituents who hold the longtime politician in high esteem. Many of Byrd's constituents were fiercely loyal supporters, and when it came to their love for the iconic West Virginian, age was just a number. In 2006, as Byrd neared 90, he was voted into office for an unprecedented sixth term by a nearly two-to-one margin."

"I think it's just obvious that Sen. Byrd was such a supporter for this state," said Dr. Suzanne Shipley, president of Shepherd University. "Shipley said that until his death this week, Byrd was continuing to push for additional money for a new science and technology center at Shepherd."

The facility is just one of many projects that Byrd has fought to get funding for over the years. Last November, on what proved to be his final birthday, Byrd visited the Eastern Panhandle for a groundbreaking on the newest phase of construction on WVU. 9. He noted that day that he had obtained nearly $1 billion statewide for roadway projects alone during his tenure in the Senate.

Residents who were on hand for the event let him know that he was forever in their hearts, and that the work he had done over the years had not gone unnoticed.

"We love you, Sen. Byrd," a man shouted from the back of the room that day, according to media reports.

The facility is just one of many projects that Byrd has fought to get funding for over the years. Last November, on
University officials mourn Byrd’s death

SHEPHERDSTOWN — Shepherd University is mourning the passing of U.S. Sen. Robert C. Byrd, who died Monday.

"Sen. Byrd was a true friend of Shepherd University," said President Suzanne Shipley. "Much of the university’s recent expansion was due to federal funding requested by former President David Dunlop and obtained by Sen. Byrd. His career made a lasting impact on Shepherd, as it did on the state and nation. We will miss him."

Officials said that Byrd was "a true supporter" of Shepherd University, proving his dedication to education and to the people of the Eastern Panhandle by obtaining funding for three state-of-the-art facilities on Shepherd’s campus; Erma Ora Byrd Hall, which houses the nursing department; the Scarborough Library addition and the Robert C. Byrd Center for Legislative Studies, which houses the senator’s papers; and the Robert C. Byrd Science and Technology Center.

In September 2005, Byrd gave the inaugural Constitution Day address at Shepherd University.

It was through his leadership that the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2005 contained language that educational institutions receiving federal funds shall hold an educational program for their students on the U.S. Constitution on Sept. 17.

His address at Shepherd was televised by C-Span.

Raymond Smock, director of the Robert C. Byrd Center for Legislative Studies, said the passing of Byrd "completes one of the most remarkable careers in the annals of the United States Senate and the history of West Virginia."

“We are proud that Sen. Byrd selected Shepherd University to be the repository of his personal papers and the remarkable record of his Senate career,” Smock said.

The Robert C. Byrd Center for Legislative Studies, 213 N. King St., on the campus of Shepherd University in Shepherdstown, will open its rotunda for any member of the campus community and the general public to come by and sign a book of condolences and comments on Byrd’s career that will be kept as a permanent part of his archive. The rotunda will be open from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., from now to July 2.

There is a photo tribute to Byrd on Shepherd University’s website at www.shepherd.edu.

— From staff reports
Byrd Center prepares to receive 57 years of documents

When Senator Byrd passed away early Monday morning, Raymond Smock's job suddenly became very busy. Smock, Director of the Byrd Center for Legislative Studies in Shepherdstown, W.Va., now has only one month to transfer thousands of square feet of documents from Byrd's career from Congress to the archives at the Byrd Center. Full coverage in this Friday's Shepherdstown Chronicle, photographs below. Photos by Michael Theis, Chronicle Staff

Continued on the next page
Raymond Smock, director of the Byrd Center for Legislative Studies, opens up a random box of documents from the late Sen. Byrd's career in Congress. The Byrd Center already has over 600 square feet of documents from Byrd's career in the legislature. Over the next few months, Smock expects to receive "several thousand" more square feet of documents. "It will probably require off-site storage," said Smock.
Smock stands at the end of a row of empty bookshelves in the archival room of the Byrd Center. Over the next month, Smock and his staff will be working closely with the late senator's staff to transfer 57 years of documents from Congress to Shepherdstown for preservation. "It's a daunting task," said Smock as he walked through the archives.

Continued on the next page
Byrd was a respected, self-taught historian, says Smock as he stands in front of a wall of binders. Each contains a photocopied tome used by Byrd in his historical research on the Senates of the United States and the ancient Roman Republic.

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The declining health and last illness of the wild ambition and black passions of his sons, and his sons' year of his life, and in the fourth of his reign. In his eleventh year, reached the heart of Scotland, are reported to have cost the Romans thousand men.

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"Severus dies at York (211)" wrote Byrd in the margins of a photocopied text, a reference to the death of third century Roman Emperor Septimus Severus. Byrd exhaustively researched Roman republicanism, often drawing political parallels between ancient Rome and modern America.

Labels bearing Sen. Byrd's distinctive jittery handwriting still identify binders of photocopied Roman histories, which the late senator researched for his history "The Senate of the Roman Republic"
In their final form, all records archived at the Byrd Center will bear these official labels, identifying the collection to which each box belongs. Officials hope the center will be used in the future not only to study the life of Sen. Byrd, but also to study larger legislative politics.
Late U.S. Sen. Byrd remembered in Panhandle for personal touch

By MATTHEW UMSTEAD
matthewu@herald-mail.com

MARTINSBURG, W.V.A. — As busy as he was, Robert C. Byrd, West Virginia’s senior senator, always had time to say hello and “chit-chat,” local officials recalled Monday.

“Once the man met you, I don’t think he ever forgot you,” Berkeley County Circuit Clerk Virginia M. Sine said.

Every once in a while, Sine said she would receive a telephone call from Byrd, who would want to talk, if only for a short while.

Former Morgan County Republican Del. Charles Trump IV recalled receiving a call from Byrd while the Berkeley Springs attorney was working for a client on a deadline just before Christmas.

Trump said there was no staff to answer the office phone when it rang and on the line was Byrd, who wanted to wish him a Merry Christmas.

It was “very special,” Trump said.


“He would just call people that he knew and he was always there to connect,” Unger said of phone calls he received from the senator seeking feedback or to simply say hello. “He enjoyed it.”

Real estate broker Connie Perry, who considered Byrd a good friend, said the senator, even with all his political power and success, was “a down-to-earth man” who wasn’t above mopping the kitchen floor or shopping for groceries at the local market.

“He was not a pretentious man in any way,” Perry said, recalling times when the senator would walk his dog in Berkeley Springs.

Dana Closwser, broker and sales manager at The Woods, said working with Byrd and wife, Erma, on building their vacation home in the leafy resort community west of Hedgesville, W.Va., several years ago was especially rewarding.

“He was so humble ... so down to earth,” Closwser said.

Closwser said she helped the couple pick out color schemes and furniture for the A-frame chalet.

“When he came, he always came into the office to let me know he was here,” Closwser said. “He just came in to say hello.”

Closwser said Byrd sold his chalet in 2005 because his wife’s health was failing and she no longer was able to enjoy the property. Erma Byrd died in March 2006.

“They were really a close couple,” Perry said. “I think he kind of lost the will to go on” after she died.

Byrd purchased a home in Morgan Grove Heights subdivision near Shepherdstown, but former Shepherd University David Dunlop said he didn’t believe the senator visited often, especially after his wife passed away.

Dunlop recalled Byrd sharing how he had little time for sports, but on one weekend decided to immerse himself in football, watching as many games as he could, to get a sense of what he had been missing.

At the end of it all, Dunlop said Byrd concluded that he had little to show for what he saw, other than a few highlights, when he could have been more productive with his time.

And Byrd said he didn’t think he would ever do that again, Dunlop said.

Dunlop said that during one trip to Washington, D.C., he arrived at Byrd’s office “dripping wet” in sweat after literally running from Union Station to Capitol Hill after becoming ensnarled in a traffic tie-up.

Though Dunlop was still late for the meeting, Byrd was so impressed by his effort to be on time that he had his personal driver take Dunlop back to the Metro station stop at the historic railroad junction.

“Someone will fill the seat,” Dunlop said. “But they won’t replace him.”
Byrd’s reach was wide in Panhandle

Editor’s note: The following information was supplied on request to The Herald-Mail by Sen. Robert C. Byrd’s office staff following his death Monday at the age of 92.

Federal buildings: Sen. Robert C. Byrd devoted significant time and energy toward attracting federal back-office operations to West Virginia as a means to provide well-paying, stable employment to the state and to provide the federal government with low-cost, quality operations.

As a result of these efforts, more than 10 federal operations have relocated to the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia, which includes Berkeley, Jefferson and Morgan counties.

In total, these agencies support nearly 3,600 federal and contractor personnel and represent a nearly $300 million annual infusion into West Virginia’s economy for general operations, according to information provided to The Herald-Mail.

These figures do not account for the numerous private sector firms that have also come to the state to conduct business with these federal facilities, thereby creating even more jobs and opportunities.

The following are the federal entities that Sen. Byrd has helped to bring to the Eastern Panhandle, according to his office:

- The U.S. Customs and Border Protection Advanced Training Center in Harpers Ferry, W.Va.: Approximately 130 federal and contractor employees
- The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Computing Center in Martinsburg, W.Va.: Approximately 1,100 federal and contractor employees
- The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives Facility in Martinsburg; Approximately 50 federal and contractor employees
- The Coast Guard Operations Systems Center in Kearneysville: Approximately 50 federal and contractor employees
- The Coast Guard National Vessel Documentation Center in Falling Waters: Approximately 100 employees
- The Coast Guard National Maritime Center in Martinsburg: Approximately 400 federal and contractor employees
- The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown: Approximately 100 employees
- The U.S. Forest Service Leetown Science Center: Approximately 55 employees
- The Agriculture Research Service (ARS) Appalachian Fruit Research Station in Kearneysville: Approximately 70 employees
- The ARS National Center for Cool and Cold Water Aquaculture in Leetown: Approximately 35 employees
- Veterans Administration Initiative: Through the appropriations process, Sen. Byrd has been responsible for major renovations of, and additions to, each of the four Veterans Affairs Medical Centers (VAMC) in West Virginia — Huntington (including the $51 million Robert C. Byrd clinical addition and the $10 million research addition); Charleston (including the $25 million clinical addition); Beckley (including the $20 million clinical addition), the $100,000 for acquisition of 18 acres of adjacent land for a future nursing home, and the $1 million new access road); and Martinsburg (including the $5 million laundry replacement project.)

Further, Sen. Byrd secured the funds for the $76 million replacement (by new construction) of the Martinsburg Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

National Guard military construction and defense initiatives: Through the military construction and DOD accounts, Sen. Byrd has been able to ensure that the West Virginia National Guard has the adequate facilities and resources to do its job across the state and in defending the homeland, according to his office.

He has secured funding for the construction of new Armed Forces Reserve Centers; Maintenance Facilities; and Readiness Centers throughout the state; ensured the aging fleet of helicopters in the West Virginia Army National Guard would be replaced with the new UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters; made significant investments at both the Charleston and Martinsburg Air National Guard Bases; funded the construction of the Regional Training Institute and other major improvements at Camp Dawson, and has supported the operations of the Joint Interagency Training and Education Center and the West Virginia Counterdrug program.

See REACH, 83

Continued on the next page
REACH
Continued from B1

For the Martinsburg area, Byrd helped to secure a decision from the U.S. Department of Air Force to convert the 175th Airlift Wing from a C-130 unit to a C-5 unit, and helped to secure approximately $380 million to upgrade the infrastructure at the 175th Airlift Wing so that it could accommodate the larger C-5 aircraft, according to his office.

Harpers Ferry National Historical Park: Sen. Byrd's efforts to restore facilities, enhance visitor opportunities, and expand the reaches at the National Park Service's (NPS) Harpers Ferry National Historical Park started nearly 50 years ago. Through these long-term efforts involving earmarks:

- Nearly all of the major historic structures have been restored and can now be toured by the public.
- Museums and special exhibits are being developed to better share the story of Harpers Ferry.
- The new visitors center and the bus system keeps the park pristine and free of congestion.
- Enhanced trail connections and river access allow visitors to better enjoy the historic and scenic wonders of Harpers Ferry.

Federal Infrastructure
Highways: Sen. Byrd has always believed that a modern, efficient highway system network is one of West Virginia's most pressing needs and is necessary for promoting economic development and job creation, as well as improved safety. Sen. Byrd has fought for funding for highway projects throughout the state, including W.Va. 6, for which he has added over $155 million, and Martinsburg's Raleigh Street Extension for which he secured $23 million. Byrd had requested an additional $9 million in the FY 2017 TIDCOD that would have allowed the state to finish the project, according to his office.

Bridges: Sen. Byrd has added full or partial funding for many bridges across the state, including the James Rumsey Bridge in Shepherdstown ($11 million in FY 2002) and the Interstate 1 bridge over W.Va. 45 ($7 million in FY 2002).

Mass transit: Sen. Byrd has increased the State of West Virginia's Mass Transit funding allocation from FY 1998 to FY 2006 in Transportation Appropriations bills and included an earmark in SAFETEA-LU that automatically provides the state with an additional annual $5 million for the duration of SAFETEA-LU. This funding allows the state to replace its aging buses and structures.

Airport improvements: Byrd has increased the State of West Virginia's Airport Improvement Program allocation by $6 million to $8 million annually since FY 2002. This significant boost to the state's allocation has helped to accelerate the pace in which airport improvements in the state can be made.

Byrd also added $21 million for the Airport Surveillance Radar (ASR-9) System at the Eastern West Virginia Regional Airport in the FY 1996 ($7 million) and FY 1992 ($14 million) Transportation Appropriations bills.

University/College Construction
Sen. Byrd has added funds for new facilities and the renovation of existing centers at nearly every state college and university in West Virginia, including:

- The expansion of the Scarborogh Library (approximately $13 million);
- The new nursing school ($10 million);
- The science and technology center ($9 million) at Shepherd University;
- The construction of the new Erma Byrd Health Professions Education Center for the Eastern Division of the West Virginia University Health Sciences Center in Martinsburg ($6.5 million);
- Renovations to the library at Potomac State College.

Community Development
City of Charles Town: Sen. Byrd has added a total of $1.2 million to support two revitalization projects in downtown Charles Town: The Washington Corridor Revitalization project and The Charles Town Gateway Revitalization project.

The Washington Corridor Revitalization project included the replacement of cracked and deteriorated sidewalks; the installation of underground utility wires; the replacement of the entire drinking water main and service pipe system; the repaving of Washington and George Streets; and, beautification items such as historically styled street lamps, new street trees, and street furniture.

The Charles Town Gateway Revitalization project targeted improvements to the eastern corridor of Washington Street.

Town of Harpers Ferry: The FY 2009 Omnibus Appropriations bill included $1.425 million as requested by Byrd to improve Potomac Street in downtown Harpers Ferry, which runs parallel to the Potomac River and is across from the newly renovated National Park Service (NPS)-owned train station. The project is a public/private partnership between the Town of Harpers Ferry, the Harpers Ferry National Historical Park and the Harpers Ferry Merchants Association.

Shepherdstown Community and Health Center: The FY 1996 VA-HUD Appropriations Bill included, at the senator's request, an amendment in the amount of $500,000 for the Town of Shepherdstown to renovate and transform the old Shepherdstown train station into a community and health center.

The renovated station, dedicated in October 2001, consists of a community center in the former main waiting room of the station and a dental office in the former freight and baggage room.

The Berkeley County Roundhouse: The project involves the renovation of three structures (the roundhouse, the frog and switch shop, and the bridge and machine shop) that are more than 130 years old. Sen. Byrd was successful in adding $2 million to the FY 2002 Transportation Appropriations bill to aid in the renovation of the roundhouse. He was also successful in adding $800,000 to the FY 2000 Transportation Appropriations bill for the Roundhouse.
Byrd legacy lives on in West Virginia

By MATTHEW UIMSTEAD
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Examples of U.S. Sen. Robert C. Byrd's power to steer billions in federal money to West Virginia are hard to miss in the Eastern Panhandle, where he helped bring 10 federal facilities that employ more than 3,200 people and channeled more than $175 million for road construction.

And community leaders said Monday that the fruits of the powerful Democratic lawmaker's labor in Washington will leave a lasting impact in the region for years to come.

"Words can not describe what he's done for the City of Martinsburg and Berkeley County," Martinsburg Mayor George Karos said Monday morning, hours after Byrd, 92, died at a Fairfax, Va., hospital.

See BYRD, A2

U.S. Sen. Robert C. Byrd gets a hug from Phyllis Smock as he arrives to dedicate the new Erma Ora Byrd Hall nursing program building in 2007. At left is former Shepherd University President David Dunlop.

Continued on the next page
Karos pointed to Byrd’s instrumental efforts in netting $23 million for the Raleigh Street Extension, noting the senator’s work to reallocate money that originally was earmarked for a bypass around Martinsburg for W.Va. 9.

Talked about for years, construction of the 1.2-mile extension of North Raleigh Street — from Race Street to Edwin Miller Boulevard — is about to begin as new four-lane sections of new W.Va. 9, another Byrd project, are nearing completion.

Ongoing improvements to W.Va. 9 have been spurred forward to the tune of more than $156 million secured by Byrd over the years, according to his office.

Byrd helped bring 10 federal facilities to Berkeley and Jefferson counties that employ more than 3,200 workers, according to a summary of “some of Sen. Byrd’s efforts in the Eastern Panhandle” that the senator’s office released Monday upon request.

Without Byrd’s intervention and ability to get federal support, the West Virginia Air National Guard base at Eastern West Virginia Regional Airport might have been lost, said Rick Wachtel, who has served on the airport’s governing board for more than 25 years.

Byrd secured about $280 million for conversion of the Guard’s 167th Airlift Wing from a C-130 aircraft unit to a C-5 unit in a series of appropriations over a multiple-year period.

“That base is going to be there many, many decades because of Sen. Byrd’s work,” said Wachtel, who also noted the senator’s appropriation of more than $20 million for the airport’s radar system in the early 1990s.

Former Shepherd University President David Dunlop said Byrd’s support for a new nursing school building ($10 million), science and technology center ($9 million) and expansion of Scarborough Library ($13 million) and the Robert C. Byrd Center for Legislative Studies, which houses the senator’s papers, have been key to the school’s growth in recent years.

Having scholars come to the college to research Byrd’s work, “I think is very significant,” Dunlop said in a phone interview.

In a school news release Monday, Byrd also was remembered for giving the inaugural Constitution Day address at the school in September 2005.

Byrd, in federal legislation that year, inserted language that required educational institutions receiving federal funds to hold an educational program for their students on the U.S. Constitution on Sept. 17.

The Robert C. Byrd Center for Legislative Studies opened its rotunda Monday for the first time, according to Dunlop.

U.S. Sen. Robert C. Byrd waves to the crowd gathered at the 167th Airlift Wing in Martinsburg before speaking during a 2009 visit. At right is West Virginia Gov. Joe Manchin III.

Karos said Byrd always was quick to respond to his concerns and most recently wrote him a letter encouraging the mayor to strive and do what he thinks is right for city residents.

“He was very dedicated to the Eastern Panhandle, as well as the state of West Virginia,” Karos said.

Former Morgan County Republican Del. Charles Trump IV agreed, describing Byrd as a “tireless worker” who was responsive, even if wasn’t always “the answer I wanted.”

“His legacy for West Virginia is enormous. It really is,” Trump said.

View @ www.herald-mail.com campus community and the general public to sign a book of condolences and comment on his career. The book will be kept as a permanent part of his archive. The rotunda will be open from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. through Friday.

“Much of the University’s recent expansion was due to federal funding requested by former President David Dunlop and obtained by Senator Byrd,” current Shepherd president Suzanne Shipley said. “His career made a lasting impact on Shepherd, as it did on the state and nation. We will miss him.”

Beyond his ability to secure millions in federal funding, Byrd was credited for staying in touch with community leaders who say he had a sharp memory and was quick to respond to them.

Wachtel recalled a meeting in Washington where he said Byrd listened to 10 or 12 speakers tell the senator about their issues and after listening to all of them, he addressed each person by name and quoted portions of each of their presentations in his response.

It was “an amazing display” of intellect and memory that Wachtel said he wouldn’t forget.

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