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Southampton High School Volleyball Seniors

What a wonderful week to celebrate the partnerships, people, and opportunities that help our Southampton County family continue to grow! As we remain "Rooted in Excellence, Growing Together," I am reminded that strong schools are built through strong communities and the people who believe in our students.

On Tuesday, I had the pleasure of attending the Obici Healthcare Foundation's 20th Anniversary Celebration at the Suffolk Center for Cultural Arts. Since its establishment in 2006, the Foundation has made a tremendous impact by supporting programs and initiatives that improve health and wellness throughout Western Tidewater. Congratulations to the Foundation on this important milestone, and thank you for your continued investment in our community!

Southampton County Public Schools is especially grateful for the $146,000 in funding received over the past two years. These generous contributions have supported renovations to the Southampton High School and Southampton Middle School football field pressbox, scoreboard sign lettering, tennis court resurfacing, and athletic equipment for our new Student Health Center. These investments help us create better spaces and opportunities for our students, and we appreciate the Foundation's commitment to the well-being of our community.

On Thursday, I attended the Spectrum Broadband Expansion Celebration at Franklin Municipal Airport, where our Southampton High School Marching Band proudly performed the National

Anthem. What a wonderful way to showcase the talent and pride of our students while celebrating an important milestone for our region! The expansion represents a significant investment in broadband access across Western Tidewater, bringing high-speed internet to thousands of rural homes and small businesses. Reliable broadband opens doors to learning, employment, healthcare, and countless other opportunities. For our students and families, improved connectivity can help make those opportunities more accessible. We are proud to see continued investments that strengthen our communities and support our region's future.

I was honored to join SHS Principal Dr. Camilla Ferebee, SHS Athletic Director Deshon Jenkins, and SHS Volleyball Coach Andrew Williams on Thursday evening to celebrate our Lady Indians Volleyball Senior Night. We recognized six incredible seniors and their parents, honoring the time, dedication, leadership, and memories they have contributed to our volleyball program. Congratulations to Paisley Benson (#4), Alex Darden (#5), Jenna Nurney (#8), Michaela Kizer (#9), Kaylee Hill (#12), and team manager Reagan Howell! Thank you for the mark you have made on Southampton High School volleyball and for representing our school with pride. We are so proud of each of you and wish you the very best as you continue to grow and pursue your next adventures.

Friday brought a little Halloween fun! I was honored to join Southampton County Manager Lynette Lowe and Franklin Southampton Economic Development, Inc. President and CEO Karl Heck as a judge for Early Childhood Western Tidewater's Pirates and Princesses Trunk or Treat at Gatherings at SoCo. The creativity on display was incredible, from beautifully decorated trunks to imaginative costumes. One of my favorite highlights was seeing the haunted house display created by our very own Southampton High School art students! Their creativity and hard work were something to celebrate, and I was proud to see their talents showcased in such a fun community event.

And now, it is time for one of our favorite traditions – Homecoming at Southampton High School! This Friday, October 30, is SHS Homecoming, and I hope you will join us to cheer on our Indians, celebrate our Homecoming Court, and recognize some special members of our school community. These traditions bring generations of Indians together and remind us of the pride, connections, and shared experiences that make Southampton special.

As we look back on this week, I am thankful for the organizations that invest in our schools, the partners who work alongside us, and the students who continue to make us proud. Every partnership, every opportunity, and every moment of school spirit helps our students and our community thrive.

Let's keep growing together, Southampton County! Go Big Red!