

THE EASTFORD Communicator



AUGUST 2026

EASTFORD.NEWS

"Eastford: One of Connecticut's best small towns." - Carol Davidge

VOL. 35, No. 1

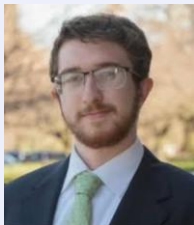


CONNECTICUT PRIMARY ELECTION

Tuesday, Aug. 11, 2026, 6 a.m. – 8 p.m.

Town Office Building

House of Representatives: 50th District (GOP)



Jadon MacCormack



Anthony Emilio

Governor (Democrat)



Ned Lamont



Josh Elliott

Early Voting: Early voting for the Primary will be conducted daily at the lower level of the Town Office Building from Monday, Aug. 3 to Sunday, Aug. 9. Hours will be from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., with the exception of Tuesday, Aug. 4, and Thursday, Aug. 6, when the hours will be extended to 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Voter Registration: Voter registration cards are available from the Registrar of Voters and in the Town Clerk's Office. Online voter registration through the Secretary of State's Office can be accessed at <https://voterregistration.ct.gov/OLVR/welcome.do>.

Residents may also verify their voter information, by visiting <https://portaldir.ct.gov/sots/lookup.aspx>. Enrollment hours for voter registration are located at Town Office Building (Lower Level).

Echoes of 1776

RESIDENTS UNITE FOR AMERICA250 READING OF DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

BY DEB RICHARDS
SPECIAL TO THE COMMUNICATOR

EASTFORD — On the evening of Wednesday, July 8, Eastford joined communities across Connecticut in a special statewide commemoration marking the day the Declaration of Independence was first publicly read throughout the original 13 colonies in 1776. At exactly 6 p.m., towns across the state gathered in unison to honor this historic moment as part of the nation's continuing celebration of America's 250th Anniversary.

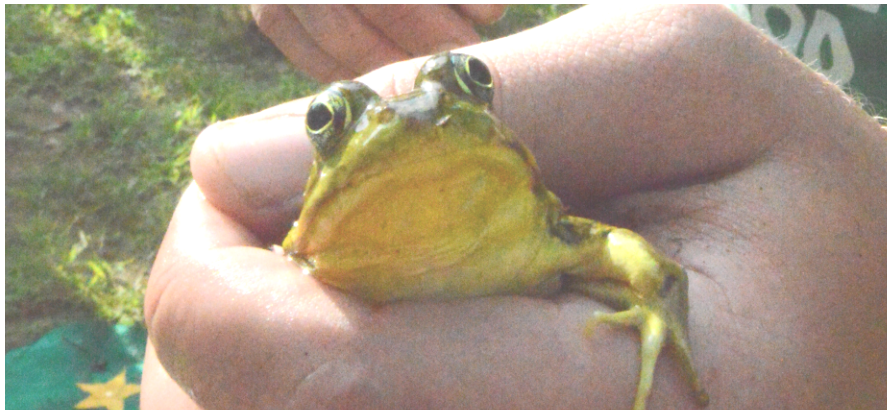
Eastford's observance, held on the steps of the Ivy Glenn Memorial, was intimate in size but rich in meaning. Residents gathered to reflect on the ideals

Turn to **AMERICA250**, pg. 19



From left, Phil Finch, Benjamin Torcellini, Deb Richards, Bev and Bruce Lindemann pose with Eastford's copy of the Declaration of Independence during the America250 event.. Courtesy photo

LEAP OF FAITH



EASTFORD — The Congregational Church of Eastford hosted its annual Frog Jump, Band Concert, and Cookout on Saturday, July 11, bringing nearly a century's worth of tradition to Crystal Pond Park for frog jumping, food, and fun. For more photos from the event, turn to page 18, and for more exclusive photos, visit the **Communicator's** Facebook page!

Adam Minor photo

IN
THIS
ISSUE



THE CUTEST
PETS IN
EASTFORD!
PGS. 16-17



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THE
EASTFORD
Communicator
LOCAL NEWS SINCE 1992

VOL. 35, No. 1 | AUGUST 2026

MANAGING EDITOR: Adam Minor
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: Arthur Brodeur
BOARD OF DIRECTORS: Michele Palulis, Chairman; Randal Chinnock, Vice Chairman; Nancy Gingras, Treasurer; Julia Torcellini, Secretary; Arthur Brodeur

The Eastford Communicator is published monthly, and as a non-profit 501(c)(3) venture, it is registered with the State of Connecticut and IRS, and is supported by advertising revenues and donations. All contributions are tax deductible.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Articles, calendar or event information, press releases, photos or questions may be sent to eastfordnews@gmail.com. Please send text in Microsoft Word format (not PDF), and high-resolution photos in JPG format. Send mail to Editor, Eastford Communicator, P.O. Box 253, Eastford, CT 06242, by the 15th of the month preceding the next issue. All submissions to the *Communicator* are subject to editing. The *Communicator* reserves the right not to accept submissions. We do not publish Letters to the Editor.

To contact the *Communicator* by phone, call (860) 337-2481, and leave a message, and someone will get back to you as soon as we can.

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CIRCULATION

The Eastford Communicator is available online at <https://eastford.news/>, and in print, free of charge, to every home in Eastford. Out-of-town subscriptions are available by request, for an annual fee of \$50 (although additional donations are appreciated).

Community rallies around local family after teenager dies in Eastford

‘OUR HEARTS ARE COMPLETELY SHATTERED’

BY ADAM MINOR
MANAGING EDITOR

EASTFORD — A 15-year-old teenager from East Hampton has passed away after drowning in Crystal Pond in Eastford on Sunday, July 12, after experiencing a medical emergency while she was paddleboarding.

According to information provided by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), the Connecticut Environmental Conservation (EnCon) Police responded to Crystal Pond in Eastford on Sunday, July 12, at 12:15 p.m., in response to a report of a person missing from a paddleboard.

Witnesses reported that the victim appeared to have a medical emergency and fell into the water. The victim, who was later identified as Cassandra Munson, was recovered by a good Samaritan who came out onto the pond to assist. The victim received treatment onshore and was transported to Day Kimball Hospital, where she was pronounced deceased.

The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner will determine the cause and manner of death. The incident is under investigation by EnCon Police.

In the days following the incident, Cassandra's aunt, Lisa Richards, established a GoFundMe to help pay for "funeral, memorial, and other expenses associated with honoring Cassandra and supporting her immediate family."

"As anyone can understand, our hearts are completely shattered, and our lives will never be the same," Richards wrote on the

GoFundMe page. "No parent should ever have to bury their child. As our family tries to process this devastating loss, my sister is facing the overwhelming burden of planning Cassie's funeral while also trying to be present for her younger daughter, Morgan, who is only 11 years old and is also grieving the loss of her mentor and older sister."

CT DEEP extended its sympathies to the victim's family and friends, and reported that no further information will be released at this time. For the family, the road ahead will be filled with struggle.

"The journey through grief is long," Richards wrote on the GoFundMe page. "Your generosity will provide them with stability and support as they begin to rebuild their lives one day at a time. If you are able to give, no amount is too small. If you are unable to donate, we ask that you please share this page, keep our family in your thoughts and prayers, and continue sharing memories of our little girl. From the bottom of our hearts, thank you for your kindness, compassion, and generosity during the most difficult time our family has faced. We will forever cherish the memories of Cassandra's life. She was deeply loved; she always loved deeply in return, and there will be a void in our hearts that will never heal."

As of press time, the GoFundMe had accumulated more than 750 donations totaling nearly \$61,000, with the total still rising. For more information on the GoFundMe or to support the family, visit <https://www.gofundme.com/f/support-for-cassies-funeral-and-her-grieving-family>.



Sometimes, the little things make the biggest difference. "Shout Outs" is your place to celebrate kindness, gratitude, and everyday heroes. Did someone brighten your day? Help without asking? Go the extra mile when no one was watching? Let's tell their story. Share your "shout out" and together, we'll spread some joy — one good deed at a time.

Shout Out to Shay Gingras and her fiancé Oren Thomas. At their recent engagement party, they requested that in lieu of gifts, people could bring non-perishable food items and/or cash for the Eastford Food Pantry or donate to Connecticut Food Share.

Send your "shout outs" to Managing Editor Adam Minor at eastfordnews@gmail.com, or send a message to us on our Facebook page. Please keep your messages to 75 words or less. The editor has the right to accept, reject, or edit any submission. Deadline to receive "shout outs" is the 15th of every month before the next publication.

Thank You!

Thank you to Bette Giordano for your donation to the Eastford Communicator!

DONATIONS MAKE THE COMMUNICATOR POSSIBLE!

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BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

'It's the people who make the business'

EASTFORD BUILDING SUPPLY CONTINUES LEGACY OF QUALITY SERVICE

BY RANDAL CHINNOCK
SPECIAL TO THE COMMUNICATOR

EASTFORD — "I never thought that I would own a lumber yard in my lifetime," Ray Bergeron said. But then he did — and has been the owner of Eastford Building Supply for the past 21 years.

Eastford Building Supply (EBS) was founded by Ed Trepal in 1955. Trepal was a contractor who decided to start selling products, and he built a small building at the present location. That original building — which is now at the center of the store — has since been added onto eight times. In 1960, EBS was bought by Jack and Ned Hopkins, two brothers originally from Providence, R.I. The boys' dad owned a lumber yard in Providence, which drew them into the business. One ended up moving to Eastford, and the other to Woodstock. They built a big base of custom builders, and focused on "quality product above and beyond their competition," Bergeron said.

Bergeron is also from Rhode Island, and still lives there. Early on, he managed two Grossman's building products stores there, then worked for a few wholesale lumber distributors, which led him to call on EBS. In 2003, Jack Hopkins apparently recognized Bergeron's potential and lured him away from the distributor to

become store manager at EBS.

Fast forward to 2005, when Bergeron bought the business. He has kept the focus on quality products, which he believes leads to a loyal customer base. EBS now has 400 to 500 active customers and delivers all over the area, including as far away as Cape Cod. Ninety percent of sales are to contractors. Eventually, Ray's son Eric joined the business and now runs the hardware department.

"What makes us so good — besides quality products — are the people," said Ray. "Knowledgeable people who know how to handle customers."

Like most lumber yards, he said, they don't have outside salespeople. But they will go to a building site and take measurements for quoting things like siding and roofing. EBS also has outside resources for truss design and floor systems. In sum, EBS aims to have all necessary materials and key services on hand for building homes.

EXPANDING INTO NEW AREAS

In 2011, EBS opened its kitchen design center. Two years later, Chuck Bosquet joined the company as its kitchen designer. A second designer has since joined him. About half of the kitchens are sold to retail customers.



Jack Hopkins receiving a "Lumber Person of the Year" award from the Lumber Dealers Association of Connecticut. Ray Bergeron received the same award in 2017.

Courtesy photo

Bergeron is well aware of the surging prices of building materials over the past year — especially for cedar products — an increase he believes is partly due to the 15-percent tariff on the import of Canadian wood products. A lot of what he sells is imported, so high tariffs on aluminum and other products increase his costs. Higher-priced oil affects products like paints, stains, and PVC trim. Most of the price increases, however, have been market-driven.

"Companies get what they can get. They know what they can put on it. A lot of it is a greed thing," he said.

It is a mystery to him that with so much competition in products like composite decking, prices continue to rise. PVC board prices keep going up because, although there seem to be many "manufacturers," there are really only two companies who actually make the product. And consolidation of lumber yards and

suppliers to lumber yards — primarily by private equity firms — is reducing both competition and salespeople's product knowledge, he says.

Despite the ups and downs in the economy, when asked what keeps him up at night, Ray answered: "Actually, nothing." That's what happens when you do things right.

EBS continues to thrive, with 19 full-time employees — six of whom live in Eastford. He uses them year-round. During slow days or the off-season, employees perform maintenance and other work on-site.

"It's the people who make the business," he said.

Editor's Note: Business Spotlight is offered to advertisers who commit to a quarter page or larger ad for 12 issues. One Business Spotlight is available per issue. Contact ads.eastfordnews@gmail.com for more information.



An Eastford Building Supply delivery truck in 1968. Courtesy photo

What CT's new agrivoltaics law means for Eastford's agricultural future

BY AMELIA PELOQUIN
SPECIAL TO THE COMMUNICATOR

EASTFORD — Eastford is one of Connecticut's most rural communities. Its working farms, forests, and open fields contribute not only to the local economy, but also to the town's historic character and scenic landscape. While solar projects and agriculture have seemed like competing land uses in the past, a new solar law aims to bring them together in an innovative way. Rather than viewing farming and solar energy as competing land uses, the new agrivoltaics program enables agricultural production and solar energy generation on the same land. As Connecticut seeks to meet growing electricity demand while controlling costs and preserving its agricultural heritage, the state's new solar legislation marks an important policy shift.

The Connecticut General Assembly recently passed, and Gov. Ned Lamont signed on June 4, H.B. 5340, An Act Concerning Renewable Power Generation. The law establishes new programs, regulatory requirements, and study mandates intended to advance Connecticut's renewable energy goals. Although most of the media attention on this new law has focused on plug-in solar systems (that is, individual solar panels that can simply be plugged into an electrical outlet, and which are very attractive to apartment dwellers and homeowners who just want a little relief from their electricity bills), H.B. 5340 is much broader in scope. Of

particular interest to Eastford landowners is the new mandate for the state to create an "agrivoltaics" program, which aims to help working farmland generate solar energy in a way that fits in with its traditional agricultural usage.

Because much of Eastford remains agricultural, any proposal for utility-scale solar has the potential to generate significant public interest. In Connecticut, rural residents often support renewable energy conceptually, but also express concern about preserving productive farmland and maintaining the town's rural character. Agrivoltaics offer a potential compromise. Properly designed projects could provide farmers with additional income while allowing agricultural production to continue. This supplemental revenue may help family farms remain financially viable during periods of fluctuating commodity prices and increasing operating costs.

While the concept of agrivoltaics combines agriculture and solar generation on the same property, it could work in different ways across farms — for example, by grazing sheep beneath solar panels or growing certain crops around solar installations. For Eastford landowners with active farmland, this could eventually create opportunities to generate income from solar while maintaining agricultural use. The details still need to be developed by state agencies, but it signals Connecticut's interest in encouraging solar projects that preserve working farms rather



A new Connecticut law passed in June mandates that the state create an "agrivoltaics" program, which aims to help working farmland generate solar energy in a way that fits with its traditional agricultural use. Photo courtesy Werner Slocum/National Renewable Energy Laboratory

than converting farmland entirely to energy production.

For rural communities such as Eastford, where agriculture remains an important part of the town's identity and economy, the legislation offers both opportunities and challenges. While agrivoltaics presents opportunities, successful implementation depends on careful planning. Not every crop performs well beneath solar panels, and system designs must allow adequate sunlight, equipment access, and drainage. Rural communities will also need to evaluate visual impacts, construction traffic, stormwater management, and compatibility with neighboring properties. Maintaining genuine agricultural production — not simply placing a few animals on a solar site — will be essential if agrivoltaics are to achieve their intended purpose.

As the new law is implemented,

Eastford's farmers, residents, and local officials will play an important role in determining how agrivoltaics will be part of the town's future. For Eastford, this could create an opportunity to shape future development in ways that reflect local values. By encouraging thoughtfully designed agrivoltaic projects that protect prime farmland, the town can support clean energy without sacrificing the agricultural landscape that has defined the community for generations.

By extending solar programs, streamlining permitting, and exploring new approaches such as agrivoltaics, the new solar law lays the groundwork for Connecticut's renewable energy policies through 2035. It will be worth watching how these changes affect homeowners, farmers, and communities like Eastford in the years ahead.

LAMONT, AGRICULTURE OFFICIALS VISIT BUELL'S ORCHARD



EASTFORD — On Friday, July 17, Buell's Orchard played host to Gov. Ned Lamont and Commissioner of Agriculture Bryan Hurlburt. Officials discussed the state of specialty crop agriculture, especially fruit growing in Connecticut. Owners Jeff and Jonathan Sandness were also joined by State Sen. Jeff Gordon, CT Farm Bureau President Paul Larson and Eastford First Selectman Deb Richards.

Courtesy photos

Library kicks off 'Colonial Days' summer reading program

EASTFORD — On Tuesday, July 7, the Eastford Public Library welcomed Revolutionary War reenactor Tom Angels, from History Without Walls, to kick off the library's "Colonial Days Summer Reading Program - Week One: Colonial Life." Angels, an amateur vexillologist (an expert or scholar who studies the history, symbolism, and usage of flags), gave attendees a lesson on Revolutionary War-era flags and their symbolism. He also walked people through the various types of clothing colonists would have worn. Children between the ages of 4-7 left behind their simple frocks and began dressing just as the adults in their lives! Young volunteers remarked on the heaviness of the many layers of clothing.

Courtesy photos



FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT: DONNA LEAKE

I hope everyone in our school community is enjoying the summer months and taking time to relax, reconnect, and create lasting memories with family and friends. While students are enjoying a well-deserved break, summer remains one of our busiest seasons as we prepare for another successful school year.

- **Summer Preparations for the New School Year:** The district and school administrative teams are focused on implementing procedures and protocols that will ensure a welcoming and successful return for the Eastford Elementary School staff on Aug. 25 and students on Aug. 27.

Our custodial team has been hard at work cleaning, painting, and making repairs throughout the school. Small groups of teachers have been working collaboratively to refine curriculum and assessment practices to provide every student the opportunity to learn and succeed. Once their classrooms are cleaned, teachers will begin setting up their learning spaces and preparing an engaging, welcoming environment for students.

- **Summer Facilities Improvements:** Several facility improvement projects are underway to enhance our learning environment and make our school ready to welcome students this fall. This summer, our gymnasium is receiving a fresh coat of paint, and the middle school roof is being replaced. Modifications have also been made to several lower-level classroom spaces to better support a variety of student needs. Additional structural improvements

have been completed on both the inside and outside of the connecting corridor leading to the playground and storage areas. These important investments reflect our continued commitment to providing a safe, welcoming, and supportive learning environment for all students.

- **Transportation and After-School Programs:** EASTCONN will once again provide school bus transportation for our students. Once finalized, updated bus routes will be posted on our district website. Since we will be utilizing three buses to transport students to and from school, we anticipate shorter routes, which should allow for later morning pickup times and earlier afternoon arrival times at home.

The Hale YMCA will once again offer before- and after-school programs for our students. Thanks to the continuation of our after-school grant, we will be able to offset the cost of after-school care for students in grades K–8. Additional details are available in the flyer posted on our website.

In addition to YMCA programming, we will also offer free extended-day learning opportunities for students in grades K–8.

- **Back-to-School Information:** All families with students attending Eastford Elementary School will receive a letter from Principal Carole McCombe containing important information about the start of the school year.

If you are new to Eastford, please contact the Eastford Elementary School office as soon as possible to register your children in grades

pre-K–12. Information about the registration process, the 2026–2027 school calendar, district and school policies, and other important updates is available on our website at www.eastfordct.org. Please note that information for Eastford high school students is best accessed through their respective high school websites.

- **Staffing Update:** Please join me in congratulating Mr. Charlie Kernan, our director of Pupil Services and middle school Social Studies teacher, on his appointment as Assistant PPS Director in the Killingly School District.

Mr. Kernan has made a significant impact on our district, serving in multiple roles with dedication, compassion, and an unwavering commitment to students. While we will certainly miss him, we are proud of this well-deserved opportunity and grateful for his years of outstanding service to our school community.

As is often the case in a small district, Mr. Kernan fulfilled many important responsibilities. We are actively seeking qualified candidates to continue this important work. We are also in the process of hiring an additional special education teacher to strengthen our continuum of educational services and expand programming options for students. We remain committed to recruiting talented educators who will become valued members of our school community.

- **Designated High School Study:** At its summer meeting on Thursday, Aug. 20, at 6 p.m., the Board of Education will receive a report from the Ad Hoc High

School Committee regarding the selection of the district's designated high school. Over the past several weeks, the committee has carefully reviewed options and gathered information to help guide this important decision.

Community input will be an essential part of the process. The Board of Education will host a Community Conversation on Thursday, Sept. 24, from 6–8 p.m. Residents are encouraged to attend, learn more about the committee's work, ask questions, and share their perspectives before the board considers its next steps. The invitation to this Community Conversation is posted on the Eastford School website.

Our district's success is built upon the support and involvement of this wonderful community, and I encourage everyone to participate in this important conversation about our future.

Looking Ahead

As we look ahead, we remain committed to academic excellence, student well-being, school safety, and strong partnerships with our families and community. I look forward to welcoming everyone back for another year of learning, growth, and collaboration.

In the meantime, I wish all members of the Eastford community continued enjoyment of the summer. If you have any questions, concerns, or would like to schedule an appointment, please feel free to contact me at dleake@eastfordct.org. You are also always welcome to stop by and say hello before one of our regularly scheduled Board of Education meetings.

Eastford resident celebrates graduation from Woodstock Academy

EASTFORD — Emmanuel Edith Wheaton Smith Kaberia, of Eastford, graduated Summa Cum Laude with the Woodstock Academy Class of 2026, concluding a high school career defined by academic excellence, leadership, and service.

Kaberia earned Certificates of High Achievement in AP Calculus AB and AP Chemistry, was inducted into the Mu Alpha Theta National Mathematics Honor Society, and received the

Club. These experiences reflect his love for scientific inquiry, mathematical problem-solving, servant leadership, and community engagement.

This fall, Emmanuel will attend the University of Connecticut to pursue a Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering. Alongside his studies, he has enlisted in the Air National Guard, where he will proudly serve his country while continuing his education.



FROM THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF EASTFORD: EVAN BURGESS

Jesus gets a bad rap these days. It's not all that surprising why. His message and purpose can be hard to discern because so many in our day and age hijack His name and teachings for their own purposes rather than His. What this means is that it's very likely what you've heard about Jesus in popular media is a distorted version of Him. Though there are an endless number of misrepresentations of Jesus out there, I'd like to dispel one of them for you.

Our church, the Congregational Church of Eastford, has just hosted a couple of town

events in July — our annual Frog Jump/Cake Walk, and our 8th Sports Camp at the school. I'd like to share with you why we do these and the heart behind them. We as a church community seek to be like Jesus, to follow in His example and do the things He did and said. And one of the things Jesus did a lot, if you read the gospel accounts in the Bible, is eat and drink with people just like you all. If you were looking for Jesus back when He walked the earth, chances are you'd likely find Him reclining at a table with the locals.

Jesus hung out with people who knew Him, and people who didn't know Him from Adam. He spent time with the healthy and the sick, the powerful and the weak, the respected and the outcasts, the old and the young (He repeatedly exhorted His followers to be more like children). Most shocking of all, Jesus spent a lot of time with those who had been marked as the sinners of His day — prostitutes and tax collectors. Even in His own day, Jesus had a bad rap. In fact, when the religious leaders noticed how much Jesus whooped it up with these "sinners," they called Him out and asked Him why.

"Jesus answered and said to them, 'It is not those who are well who need a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.'"

This is not how I hear people talk about Jesus on the internet and in the news. More often than not, I hear Jesus' name used to shoo away certain people, to shame and guilt those whom our society deems "sinners." However, this is not the picture the Bible paints of Jesus. In fact, if you read the gospels, the only people Jesus seems to be troubled by are those who think they are righteous, powerful, and better than everyone else because of their own goodness.

All that to say, as our church seeks to be a community like Jesus, we want you to know we're here. We're here to eat and drink with you. We're here for you when you're feeling weak or in need or lost or broken. And if you join us for a Sunday morning in any of these states, you'll be in good company. We are a community in need of a doctor ourselves, and we can tell you all about Him. You're welcome any Sunday. We currently meet each Sunday at 10 a.m. at the Eastford Elementary School, and will let you all know when we're in our new building! We'd love to have you.



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Congregational Church of Eastford

www.cceastford.org

Visit calendar and event tabs for more!

Pastor Mike Moran
Associate Pastor Evan Burgess

10 AM Weekly Sunday Service
Held at Eastford Elementary School

Nursery (Birth – Pre-K)
Bible Explorers (Grades K – 4)
We'd love to have you join us!

Our new building is under construction but getting closer!

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ATTENTION

OUT-OF-TOWN RESIDENTS

There is an annual \$50 subscription fee for non-Eastford residents to receive the *Communicator*, which covers production and mailing costs. For uninterrupted service, if you would like to continue receiving the *Communicator* for the next year, please mail a check for a minimum of \$50 to *Eastford Communicator*, P.O. Box 253, Eastford, CT 06242. We must receive payment no later than August 15.



DID YOU KNOW?

A trained bloodhound's sense of smell is so spot on that it can be admitted as evidence in a court of law. Perhaps it's because bloodhounds can follow tracks more than 300 hours old and can stay on a scent trail for more than 130 miles.



DOG OF THE MONTH

Meet Darcy! — Darcy is a stunning, spotted girl with gorgeous blue eyes and a whole lot of brains! This smart, active pup loves to learn, explore, and be part of the action. She would thrive with an active family who can keep her mind and body busy. Darcy is about 2 years old, weighs 40 pounds, is dog-friendly, and is ready for her next adventure! PawSafe is located at 348 Old Colony Rd., Eastford. Learn more at www.pawsafe.org.

FOOD PANTRY UPDATE: AUDREY CARABEAU

The Eastford Food Pantry is located at the Eastford Baptist Church, 133 Union Rd. Please see our hours of operation below.

If you reside in Eastford and need food assistance, call Audrey Carabeau at (860) 933-7685 to sign up. We have the resources to help you! All referrals are kept confidential. Delivery is available to homebound individuals.

Thank you to all who donated food, home goods, and money in July. Your donations are greatly appreciated by our pantry families. The Eastford Food Pantry relies on

donations from the community. All donations to the pantry can be dropped off at Bowen's Garage or at the Town Office Building during regular business hours. Check donations can be mailed to Eastford Food Pantry, 16 Westford Rd., Eastford, CT 06242.

Donation suggestions: Tuna, canned fruit, healthy snacks, crackers, jelly, pasta, pasta sauce, deodorant, laundry detergent. Thank you for your support!

Eastford Food Pantry hours: Monday, Aug. 3, 8-10:30 a.m.; Wednesday, Aug. 19, 2-4 p.m.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE: SEN. JEFF GORDON

The state legislature may be out of session, but a lot of work is still being done, be it attending to constituent services, helping with municipal matters, being out and about in the towns of the Senate District, or working on items for next year's session.

I continue to focus on affordability issues, including ways to cut property taxes by further increasing funding for public education. I helped get more state funding overall this year. I am working to get more done. By better funding these costs, we can reduce the pressure on your property taxes to keep them from rising. It is about making Connecticut more affordable for you and

your family. The state can afford this without increasing taxes if it refocuses and repurposes the tax money it already has, and lets you keep your hard-earned money up front by stopping over-taxing you.

As always, please reach out to me if I can help you with a constituent matter, answer a question, or take up a concern. You can call my office at (860) 240-800, e-mail me at jeffrey.gordon@cga.ct.gov, check for news and sign up for my free e-newsletter at www.senatorgordon.com, or learn about what I am doing on Facebook at "Senator Jeff Gordon." I'm proud to represent Eastford!



Our next issue will be published on:

Sept. 1

Please send all submissions to eastfordnews@gmail.com by:

Aug. 15

YOUR AD HERE

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CALENDAR

Calendar entries must be sent to the editor no later than the 15th of the month preceding publication. Please send all calendar content to eastfordnews@gmail.com. Please try to limit calendar submissions to 100 words or fewer.

AUGUST

Monday, Aug. 3

We're going down to the farm! Join us at Eastford Baptist Church Monday, Aug. 3 through Friday, Aug. 7 for an all-new, EBC original Vacation Bible School event! Throughout the week, we will be exploring parables of Jesus Christ! What is the kingdom of God? How does salvation work? What is our role in spreading the gospel? How important is it to tell others about Jesus? Learn the answers, and so much more at Down on the Farm VBS! We will have games, snacks, crafts, contests, giveaways, and so much more! We will also be hosting a Penny War to benefit a missionary to be determined! So get your overalls, get on your tractor, and join us down on the farm this summer for VBS! Please note: All children signing up must be entering at least Pre-K (at least 3 years of age) and must be potty trained. If the child is not potty trained, an adult must remain with the child throughout the week. EBC volunteers are not permitted to change diapers. Register today at <https://eastfordbaptist.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/3565861>.

Tuesday, Aug. 4

Eastford Public Library will host "Wool Demo and Weaving," at 3 p.m. This program will demonstrate how colonial Americans made textiles from wool. Please register.

Thursday, Aug. 6

Eastford Public Library will host

a special "Story Time" at 11:15 a.m. with local author Alice Kuzel. Join us as she reads her charming children's book, "Woody Forgets," about a forgetful sheep that lives in Old Sturbridge Village. In the afternoon, we will host a Dungeons & Dragons club from 4:30-5:30 p.m. This group will continue to meet every Thursday. Later in the evening, the library will also host "Trivia Night" at 6:30 p.m. with Jeremy Barlow. Registration for this popular adult program is a must!

Tuesday, Aug. 11

Eastford Public Library will host "Revolutionary Connecticut," at 3 p.m., presented by the Connecticut Museum of Culture and History. This program is for all ages and will explore the roots of revolutionary sentiment in our state during that time. Please register.

Wednesday, Aug. 12

Eastford Public Library will host "Craft the Colonial Game Hoops and Graces," at 3 p.m. In the evening, we welcome teens and adults to take part in our "Maker's Night" from 6-7:30 p.m. to sew colonial seed bags. If interested in either program, please register.

Eastford Baptist Church will host its annual Teen Vacation Bible School nightly from Wednesday, Aug. 12, to Friday, Aug. 14, starting at 6:30 p.m. For teens going into Grades 7-12. Bible study, games, food, and much more! Come enjoy three nights of fun, food, and faith!

Thursday, Aug. 13

Eastford Public Library will host "Story Time" at 11 a.m. Join us for a story, craft, snack, and time of free play.

Friday, Aug. 14

Want to wrap up the summer with an inexpensive and fun family activity close to home? We have just the thing for you at Windham-Tolland 4-H Camp. Family camp starts with check-in on Friday, Aug. 14, at 6:30 p.m. and ends with a closing circle at 5:30 p.m. on Saturday, Aug. 15, after dinner. This is a chance to experience a weekend of overnight camping with the whole family. Bring Mom, Dad, the kids, Grandma, Grandpa, brothers, sisters, cousins, aunts, and uncles! Or bring your own made-up family of a group of friends (Note: All children must be accompanied by an adult). This program started in 2014 with 35 attendees. Last year we had 81. The word is out that this is a fun event. We often get two and even three generations in a cabin. Enjoy an evening campfire on Friday and a full day of camp activities on Saturday, including swimming, hiking, canoeing, kayaking, sports, low ropes, art, fishing, and more. Fee is \$60 per person and includes breakfast, lunch, snacks, dinner, lodging in our rustic cabins, and all activities. Register online at www.4hcampct.org.

Saturday, Aug. 15

Eastford Public Library will host "Our Summer Reading Program Finale" at 10:30 a.m. in the Town Park (next to the library).

Join us as we play colonial games and enjoy a sweet treat to celebrate.

Thursday, Aug. 20

Eastford Public Library hosts "Story Time" at 11 a.m. Join us for a story, a craft, a snack, and time for free play. In the evening, the Friends of the Eastford Public Library will have their monthly meeting at 5:30 p.m. Anyone is welcome to attend.

Wednesday, Aug. 19

If you have a child entering Grades 1 through 6, join us at Eastford Baptist Church from 6-8 p.m. on Wednesday, Aug. 19, for SPLASH! — a night of fun water games. SPLASH! is the official kickoff event for EBC Olympians, a weekly children's ministry that meets every Wednesday starting in September (this year's Opening Night is Wednesday, Sept. 2) and going through the first week of June. Come join a community of kids that want to grow in their faith, learn about the Word of God, and have fun! For more information, contact EBC Olympians at ebcolympians@gmail.com.

Tuesday, Aug. 25

Eastford Public Library will host "Grim Readers" at 6 p.m. This book club will be discussing "Whalefall," by best-selling author Daniel Kraus. Copies are on display and available for checkout.

Saturday, Aug. 22

Eastford Public Library will host "End of Summer Self-Care for Teens" at 10:30 a.m. Please register.

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VITAL STATISTICS

BIRTHS

June: 4

MARRIAGES

June: 1

DEATHS

June: 2

REAL ESTATE TRANSACTIONS

May 12: 64 Westford Rd., \$450,000, Kevin D. Basto to Colin J. Fausnaught

May 20: 113 Ashford Rd., Unit 5, \$256,500, John A. Gallagher to Lee Schiavetti Jr.

May 20: 86 E. Cove Rd., \$600,000, David T. Plastino to Tyler M. Channey

PUBLIC MEETINGS: AUGUST

Sunday, Aug. 2: Recreation Commission, 4 p.m., Town Office Building

Monday, Aug. 3: Board of Selectmen, 7 p.m., Town Office Building

Tuesday, Aug. 11: Planning Commission, 7:30 p.m., Town Office Building

Wednesday, Aug. 12: Crystal Pond Park Commission, 6 p.m., Crystal Pond Park, 305 Crystal Pond Rd., Woodstock, CT 06281

Thursday, Aug. 13: Bowen's Field Committee, 6 p.m., Town Office Building

Tuesday, Aug. 18: Transfer Station Committee, 9 a.m., Town Office Building

Thursday, Aug. 20: Board of Education, 6 p.m., Eastford Elementary School Library

Thursday, Aug. 27: Library Board of Trustees, 6:30 p.m., Eastford Public Library; Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission, 7 p.m., Town Office Building

WHERE IS IT?



Where was this photo taken? See the answer on page 19!

FROM THE GROVE CEMETERY ASSOCIATION BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Kindly consider assisting the Eastford Grove Cemetery Association in its pursuit of efficient perpetual care of the Grove Cemetery. We are a non-profit group that does not receive funding from the Town of Eastford. A tax-deductible donation from you will help us meet present and future beautification and maintenance requirements. Contributions of any amount will help us continue to meet our goal of providing a well-maintained, respectable final resting place for your loved ones.

Additionally, you could leave a gift to the Eastford Grove Cemetery

Association in your will or living trust, known as a bequest. This allows you to offer future support without giving up assets today. Or, you may also wish to consider making "The Grove Cemetery Association" the recipient of a memorial donation ("in lieu of flowers").

We appreciate your consideration of our appeal and welcome any questions or concerns regarding the cemetery operation. Questions? Call (860) 428-0280. You may also visit our website at: [https://](https://sites.google.com/site/eastfordgrovecemetery/)

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Yes, I would like to help. Enclosed is my gift of \$ _____

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WHAT'S GOING ON AT THE EASTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY?

KATIE BALL



The final days of summer are upon us, and I hope you are soaking them in with a good book!

Over the next several months, the library will welcome award-winning writers Paul Trembley, Andrew Clark, and Philip Fracassi. Our one-of-a-kind Author Talks continue to gain popularity as our Library Chair, Jody Blanchette, sits in cozy conversation to discuss their writing, the publishing world, and their life. Her efforts to persuade authors to visit our small, rural town do not go unnoticed, and we are grateful to offer this experience to our patrons. To highlight local talent, the library will also be hosting authors Marie Lisette Rimer and Sharon Yang. Upcoming dates will be posted shortly. Please inquire at the front desk if you have any interest in attending.

In the meantime, the library continues to celebrate America250 throughout August by offering programs for all ages. Stop in — we'd love to see you.

Library hours are Tuesdays, 11 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.; Wednesdays, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Thursdays, 11 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.; and Saturdays, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

You may reach us at (860) 974-0125 or by e-mail at eastfordpublib@gmail.com. Upcoming events and programs can be seen on the town page or on social media. If you haven't yet, please follow Eastford Public Library on Facebook and/or Instagram @eastfordpubliclibrary.

Pictured, Iver Straub plants an heirloom bean to take home during a 19th-century gardening program hosted by Old Sturbridge Village recently.

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FROM THE EASTFORD INDEPENDENT FIRE COMPANY #1 INC.



The EIFC wishes all a safe and wonderful summer season. We responded to 15 "911" calls during the month of June.

It is with sadness that we announce the passing of two of our members — William Hull, who joined in 2014; and Ernie Nowakowski, who joined in 1981. Ernie had a long and active membership as a fireman. In addition, he served as Fire Lieutenant from 1985-1987, Fire Captain from 1987-1991, Treasurer from 1978 to 1980, and was on the Board of Directors from 1991-1995.

Congratulations and thanks are in order! Congratulations to Eastford Elementary School graduate Ryan J. Collard, who

received the EIFC's 66th Citizenship Award. This award is presented to a student who demonstrates leadership, respect for school and community rules, and involvement in school and community affairs.

Congratulations to Gavin Driscoll, who has successfully met his probationary requirements and attained active membership status.

Congratulations to Dan Driscoll, who has successfully met the requirements to become Fighter I. During the previous six months, he has attended classes every Tuesday and Thursday, as well as every other Saturday. FFI training is designed to equip firefighters with the essential knowledge and skills to advance their careers in the fire services, as mandated by NFPA 1001 standards, and includes both online and hands-on components.

Thank you to the Quiet Corner Garden Club of Woodstock for providing plants for the flower bed in front of the firehouse. A picture of the flower bed accompanies this article.

Drills included fire engine



pumping skills and newborn emergency care. Fire engine pumping is essential for pump operators to effectively manage water supply and ensure successful firefighting operations. Pump operators must establish a reliable water supply, manage hose lines, and perform various tasks efficiently. Understanding the apparatus and its capabilities is fundamental to their role. Training also includes scenarios that present challenges such as equipment failures or unexpected changes in water supply. This drilling prepares the operators to think critically and adapt to real-world situations.

Newborn emergency care for the first 28 days, or four weeks, after delivery requires a combination of medical knowledge, practical infant care skills, and interpersonal abilities to provide safe and supportive care for newborns. Skills include basic neonatal care, including recognizing signs of distress or illness, CPR, and infant first aid. EMS is also trained in obstructive emergencies and transport protocols.

Summer temperatures and humidity will return. Remember to hydrate, hydrate, hydrate!

-Submitted by Jeannine Spink

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Well, this is awkward!
We took way too many photos for this issue.
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TOWN SEEKING MUNICIPAL AGENT FOR THE ELDERLY

The Town of Eastford is seeking an individual to serve as the Municipal Agent for the Elderly. This appointed local official assists residents age 60 and older by connecting them with available programs, benefits, services, and community resources. Under Connecticut law, every municipality appoints at least one Municipal Agent for the Elderly. The appointment is made by the town's chief elected official or chief executive officer for a two-year term, with the opportunity for reappointment. We are looking for someone with general knowledge of programs and services available to older adults and individuals in need, along with a genuine desire to help others. The Municipal Agent serves as a liaison, providing information, guidance, and referrals to ensure residents can access the resources and assistance available to them.

CELEBRATING AMERICA



EASTFORD — Travis Young, of Eastford, sent the *Communicator* this photo of his house and classic American pickup truck proudly flying Old Glory in celebration of our nation's 250th birthday. "It's a tribute to the greatest country in the world, made possible by the brave men and women who have fought and continue to fight to protect our freedom," Young said.

Courtesy photo



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Save the Date

The Eastford Board of Education invites all Eastford families and community members to attend a Community Conversation regarding the district's ongoing review of Eastford's designated high school.

For the past several months, the Board has been comparing and evaluating Woodstock Academy and E.O. Smith High School to better understand the opportunities each school offers Eastford students. This meeting is an opportunity to learn more, ask questions, and share your thoughts as part of the community discussion.

Thursday, September 24
6:00-8:00 p.m.
Eastford School Gymnasium

Your voice is important. Whether you are a current parent, future parent, student, resident, or community member, we encourage you to attend and participate in this conversation.

This informational meeting is intended to provide information and gather community input. No decision will be made at this event.

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Every pet has its day: Meet some of Eastford's cutest companions

EASTFORD — Our readers certainly delivered! After inviting the community to share photos of their cutest pets, the *Eastford Communicator* was flooded with entries featuring their lovable companions! While every pet deserves a blue ribbon in the eyes of its family, we've selected a collection of submissions to celebrate the companions that bring so much joy to homes across our community. Thank you to everyone who participated and helped make this one of our most heartwarming photo features yet!

Courtesy photos



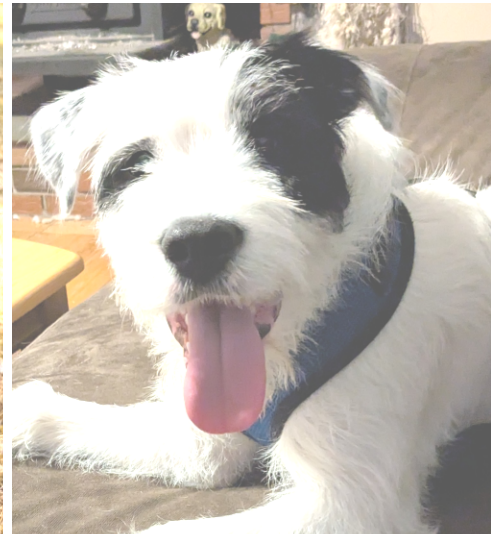
Introducing Finley, owned by Nick and Alaina Cody.



Banjo takes a stroll at Roseland Park with owner Mia Kernan.



Jeffrey Kasper sent us this shot of "Fast Eddie."



This is Emmett! According to owner Lynn Nelson, Emmett was adopted from PawSafe in November. Nelson said: "He is a character. This picture pretty much is him all the time. He is an extremely happy puppy."



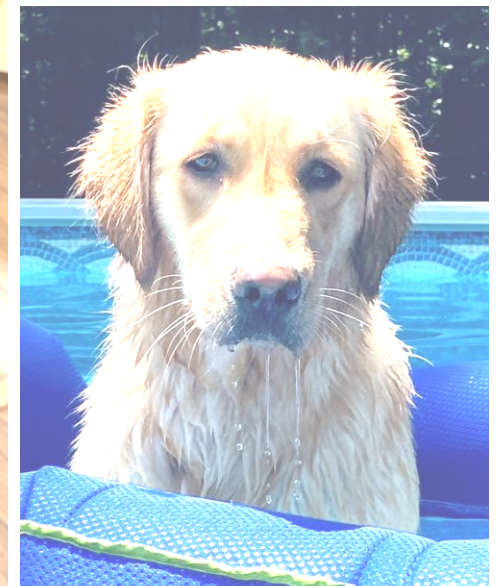
Finn, owned by Hawley Nordman.



Say hello to Chelsea, owned by Mary Ellen Ellsworth.



Say hello to Rex, owned by Aubrey Hines.



Soleil, beloved pet of the Bulan family, is "floating on sunshine."



Porkchop, owned by Hawley Nordman, is living his best life.



Piper, (above) and Monkey (below), owned by Nick and Nicole Abromaitis.



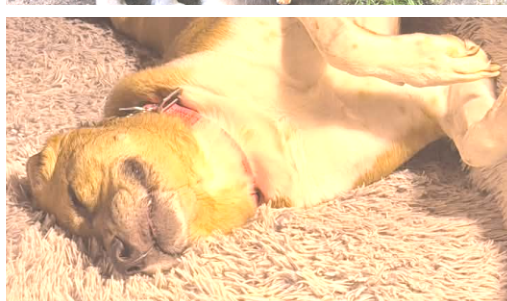
Quigley, owned by Jeremy and Lauren Barlow, cools off in the brook.



Gertrude Beatrice (a.k.a. "Miss Gertie"), owned by Steven Williamson.



Here's Pippa, owned by Kimberly McVey.



This is Dixie, owned by Eric Bertram.



Ruthie, owned by David and Wendy O'Brien.



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Family fun takes center stage at CCE frog jump event



EASTFORD — On Saturday, July 11, Crystal Pond Park was filled with the smell of hamburgers and hot dogs, the sounds of music by the East Woodstock Cornet Band and the squeals of children as they watched frogs jump. The Congregational Church of Eastford held its annual Frog Jump, Band Concert and Cookout, continuing a tradition that has endured for nearly a century. Along with the frog-jumping contest (see results below), attendees were treated to a full cookout, cotton candy, ice cream, a bounce house, swimming in Crystal Pond, and the traditional cakewalk to conclude the evening, which awarded desserts to random walkers in a musical-chairs style. For more photos of the winners of the cakewalk portion of the event, check out the *Eastford Communicator* Facebook page! *Adam Minor photos*

CCE Frog Jump 2026 Results

Small Frogs (<2") – 24 contestants

1st Place: Isabel Howe, of Pomfret, with "Lilly" at 64 inches
2nd Place: Mariana Pechie, of Ellington, with "Froggy" at 63.5 inches
3rd Place: Jemma McPhail, of Putnam, with "Yogurt" at 59.25 inches

Large Frogs (>2") – 18 contestants

1st Place: Jonah Klar, of Chaplin, with "Bob" at 96 inches
2nd Place: Miles King, of Killingly, with "King" at 90 inches
3rd Place: Elianna Kneeland, of Woodstock, with "Jeffrey" at 78 inches



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WHERE IS IT?



ANSWER: The obelisk at the gravesite of Gen. Nathaniel Lyon in General Lyon Cemetery on General Lyon Road.

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Eastford joins statewide celebration of the Declaration of Independence

AMERICA250
Continued from pg. 1

of liberty, equality, and self-government that have shaped the nation for two and a half centuries.

The evening began with welcoming remarks from Deb Richards, who shared the history behind the July 8 observance. While July 4 marks the adoption of the Declaration by the Continental Congress, it was on July 8, 1776, that the document was first read aloud to the public, allowing citizens throughout the colonies to hear the words that declared America's independence.

One of the evening's most memorable moments came as Benjamin Torcellini delivered a stirring reading of the entire Declaration of Independence. His expressive delivery and commanding presence gave renewed life to the timeless words

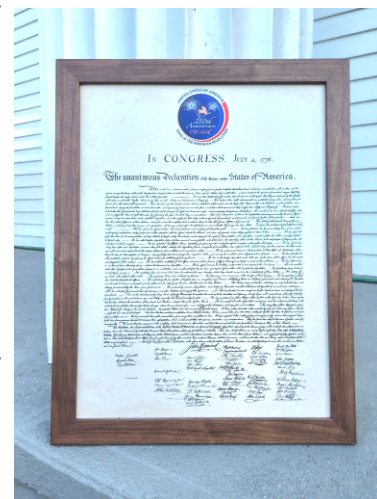
penned nearly 250 years ago. As he proclaimed, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal," the audience was reminded of the enduring ideals upon which the nation was founded.

Following the reading, Bev and Bruce Lindemann led those gathered in a heartfelt rendition of "America the Beautiful," inviting the community to join together in song. The program continued with Phil Finch, President of the Eastford Historical Society, who presented "Eastford: A Historic Perspective," highlighting the town's rich history. Adding to the significance of the occasion, Mark Sheldon Sr., representing the Sons of the American Revolution, presented the Town of Eastford with a beautifully framed copy of the Declaration of Independence. The document is now proudly displayed in the lobby of the Town Office Building, where it

will serve as a lasting reminder of the freedoms and principles that continue to unite the community.

Although modest in scale, Eastford's July 8 celebration reflected the pride and patriotism of a town committed to remembering its past while looking toward the future. The evening served not only as a tribute to the nation's founding but also as a reminder that the ideals expressed in the Declaration of Independence remain as relevant today as they were in 1776.

The success of the event was made possible through the dedication of many community members. Special thanks are extended to Benjamin Torcellini, Bev and Bruce Lindemann, Phil Finch, and Mark Sheldon Sr. for sharing their time, talents, and enthusiasm to create such a meaningful program. Appreciation is also extended to everyone who attended and helped



Eastford's copy of the Declaration of Independence, in celebration of America250. Courtesy photo

commemorate this historic milestone as Eastford joined communities across Connecticut in honoring the birth of our nation.



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