

Valley & State

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Crossword, 2 Obits, 4, 5, 6

The storm that came and went

THE heat wave has broken, power has been restored and I can return to confusing the word "derecho" with "derecha," the Spanish word for the opposite of left.

Speaking of the dearly departed derecho, the June 29 straight-line windstorm that left most of West Virginia and several neighboring states without power



RICK STEELHAMMER

was the subject of a Washington Post contest to give the destructive meteorological

Get those counties moving!

Leaders aim for fitness in first-ever "Healthy Initiative" conference

By **Kate Long**
Staff writer

Last winter, Jerry Linkenogger, Clay County Commission President, decided local officials need to get together and trade ideas on ways to help local people get fit.

"I read a newspaper article that really floored me," he said. "It said West Virginia University confirmed that more than one in four West Virginia fifth-graders is now obese. One in four already has high blood pressure. What's their future going to be? That leads straight to diabetes and heart disease."

Driving the narrow, winding roads of Clay County, he kept thinking about it. "If we don't do something now, we'll have unsolvable problems 10 years from now," he said.

"I kept wondering what people are doing in other counties," he said. So when Patti Hamilton, West Virginia Association of Counties director, proposed a health conference for local



THE SHAPE WE'RE IN

officials, Linkenogger quickly agreed to help.

Six months later, the first "Healthy Counties" conference will take place in Charleston, July 23-24, partnering with West Virginia University Extension Service and the Charleston Gazette's "The Shape We're In" series.

"Health considerations have not been a traditional part of a county commissioner's job, but I'm telling you, it's everyone's job now," Linkenogger said. "I used to be school superintendent, and I can tell you, the schools or doctors can't handle this problem alone."

SEE COUNTIES, 7B



KATE LONG | Sunday Gazette-Mail

Girls in Randolph County's "Girls on the Run" club run for fun after school.