



Shepherdstown WEST VIRGINIA

TOWN HALL
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Proclamation No. 2026-16

Mayor and Town Council, Shepherdstown, West Virginia

Appalachian Heritage & Dolly Parton Day

WHEREAS, the Appalachian Heritage Festival, hosted by Shepherd University, was founded in 1996 and in 2026 celebrates its 30th anniversary on September 25 and 26, making it one of the longest-running celebrations of Appalachian culture in the region; and

WHEREAS, the Festival was created to challenge stereotypes of Appalachia and to connect audiences with the authentic music, storytelling, dance, craft, and living traditions of the Appalachian region, and continues to do so each year through free and open programming in downtown Shepherdstown; and

WHEREAS, Dolly Parton, a daughter of Appalachia whose talent, creativity, and business acumen carried her from humble beginnings to become one of the most celebrated singer-songwriters and entrepreneurs in American history, passed away on August 25, 2026, at the age of 80; and

WHEREAS, Dolly Parton's story and generosity, including through her Imagination Library literacy program, stand as a lasting symbol of the pride, resilience, and boundless potential of the Appalachian people, and continue to inspire generations of Appalachian girls and boys, women and men to reach their full potential; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Shepherdstown wishes to recognize both the Festival and Dolly Parton for their contributions to Appalachian culture and community;

NOW, THEREFORE, the Town of Shepherdstown does hereby proclaim September 25, 2026, to be "**Appalachian Heritage & Dolly Parton Day**" in the Town of Shepherdstown, in celebration of the thirtieth anniversary of the Appalachian Heritage Festival and in memory of Dolly Parton as an enduring symbol of Appalachian pride and potential, and calls upon the people of Shepherdstown to recognize this special observance and join in celebrating the culture, history, and people of Appalachia.

James Gatz, Mayor
Town of Shepherdstown
September 9, 2026