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*Kirk Billingsley  
of Monterey  
has been  
making apple  
cider for nearly  
two decades.  
Late last year  
he launched Big  
Fish Cider Co.,  
which opens for  
regular hours  
this weekend.  
Last weekend,  
four of the Big  
Fish ciders took  
home medals  
in international  
competition.  
(Photo courtesy  
Thea Klein-  
Mayer)*

## Big Fish cider makes big splash Earns 4 medals in international competition

MONTEREY — Big Fish Cider Co. in Monterey made quite an impression on cider judges last weekend in Michigan.

A Great Lakes contest gave Big Fish a “Best-in-Class” award — the first time in the competition’s 11-year history that a Virginia cidery has earned that distinction.

Big Fish Cider Co., which hasn’t even opened its doors yet except for a few tasting events, took home a total of four medals at GLINTCAP, the Great Lakes International Cider and Perry Competition in Michigan — the largest such contest in North America.

“We are honored to have these awards,” said Big Fish cidemaker Kirk Billingsley. “I had a feeling that these ciders would do well in a competition, but quite honestly I didn’t expect this level of success at our first contest. Mother Nature was on our side last year with the biggest apple crop in Highland that I have seen in recent history. It’s great to see Highland apples get the attention they deserve. I often tell folks apples grown at this elevation, without sprays and fertilizers, are just better tasting apples, and with apples like we have, you can make some of

the best cider in the world.”

Big Fish’s “Allegheny Gold” was highly commended as a New World Heritage cider to earn the gold medal and best-in-class.

“Crabbottom Pippin,” another New World Heritage cider, also earned a gold medal.

“Church Hill Blush,” made of Highland County raspberries from Church Hill Produce, took home a silver medal as a fruit cider; and “Highland Scrumpy,” made of donated apples from landowners across Highland, took home a bronze medal.

Next weekend, May 6-8, Big Fish will start holding regular hours, opening Friday, Saturday, and Sunday afternoons throughout the summer. Visitors can enjoy the cider tastings, or order a glass of their favorite in stock.

GLINTCAP is sponsored by The Great Lakes Cider and Perry Association, a not-for-profit organization formed to showcase and promote fermented apple and pear beverages. The competition took place April 22-24, and had 1,003 entries in total — 784 of which were commercial entries.

## From GRANT, page 15

eas around homes of containers and other objects that collect standing water where mosquitoes breed, wearing long sleeved shirts, pants and applying FDA-approved repellent.

Thirteen cases, all imported from zika prone areas in Central and South America, were counted in Virginia as of late April.

In other business, the board approved:

- Proclamations endorsing Virginia Business Appreciation Month and Memorial Day;
- Payment of 11.11 percent certified rate for the Virginia Retirement System employer contribution on staff recommendation; and
- An appropriation of \$72,756 left from the current year’s education budget to the schools capital improvement fund.

County administrator Roberta Lambert reminded the board that a VDOT public

hearing on primary road construction was scheduled for 4 p.m. May 16 at Blue Ridge Community College.

She told the board the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission set a scoping meeting on the proposed realignment of the Atlantic Coast Pipeline study corridor for 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. May 21 at Bath County High School.

Supervisors congratulated The Highland Center on its renovation and the county electoral board for its recognition on the state’s highest voter turnout in November 2015.

Paxton Grant told supervisors the Blue Grass Ruritan Club is sponsoring a Memorial Day Service, and details were to be announced soon.

The next supervisors meeting is a work session at 7:30 p.m. May 18 in the modular conference room.