

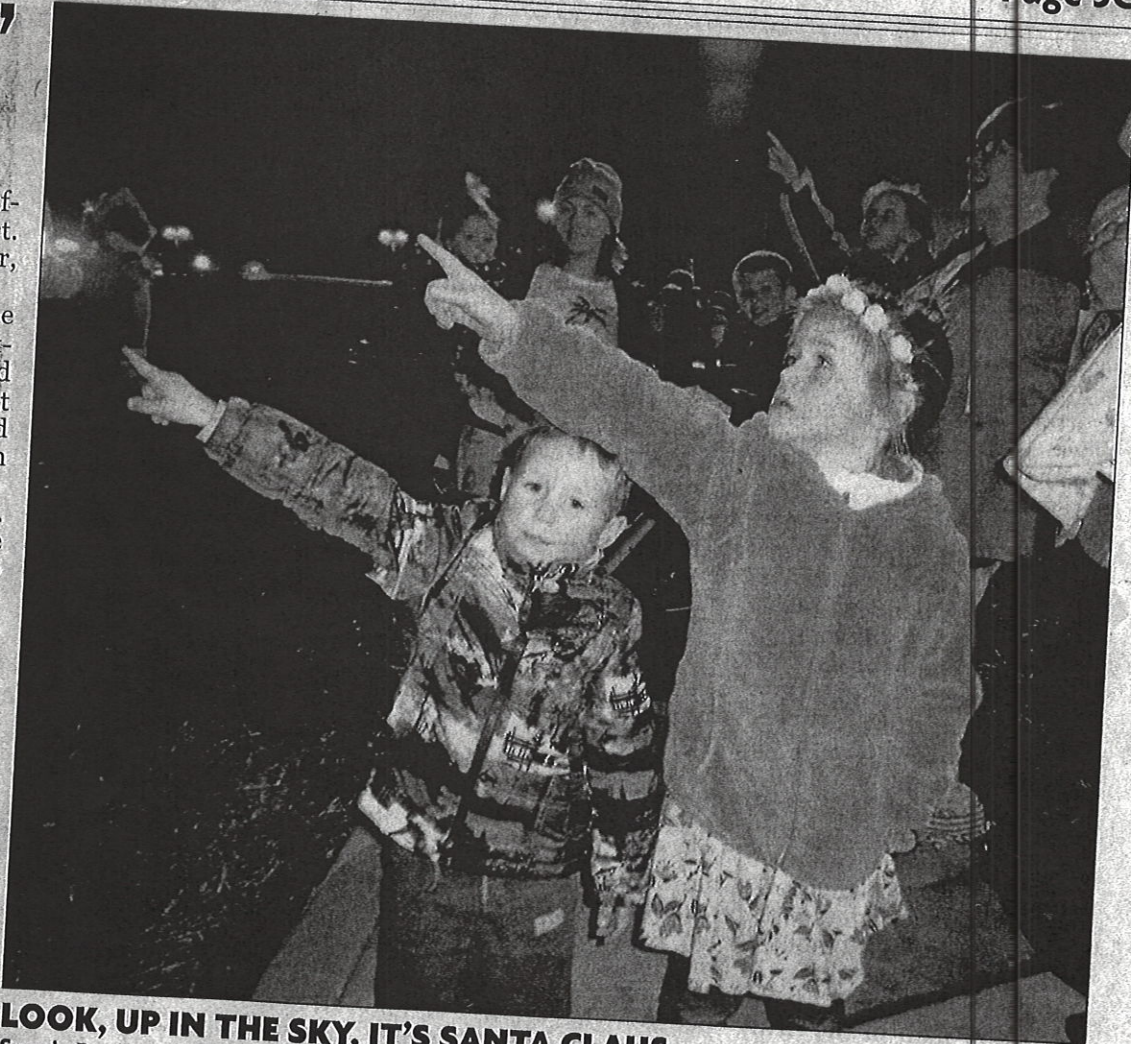
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LOOK, UP IN THE SKY, IT'S SANTA CLAUS
Scenic Regional Library in Warrenton held The Polar Express Holiday Event Dec. 17. Conductor Dan arrived by Warren Fire Protection District and Santa Claus arrived by helicopter to visit with children. Submitted photo.

Initiative petition reform and broadband lead Missouri Farm Bureau priority list

At Missouri Farm Bureau's Annual Meeting in early December, rural Missourians voiced strong support for initiative petition reform, broadband expansion, making renewable energy project taxation more equitable and alleviating veterinarian shortages.

Over 550 delegates from every corner of Missouri debated these and many other policies before adopting the 2019 Missouri Farm Bureau Policy Book. This grassroots policy development process has been a cornerstone of Farm Bureau since its founding.

Missouri has experienced a massive increase in ballot initiatives in recent years. Out-of-state interests lead and bankroll

recent gubernatorial vote in that district. This would help guard against any single region or group overriding others' wishes. Missourians must ensure any changes to our state's Constitution are broadly agreed upon. They should not be pushed through by small, but well-funded interest groups.

New policy on broadband internet would set a floor of acceptable speeds for federally funded projects. This policy would mandate speeds of no less than 25 mbps download and 3 mbps upload. It would also make providers verify that they can and do deliver the speeds they promised in federal grant applications.

Some federal broadband grant

much of the incentive for rural areas to allow wind and solar developments. Local counties have to bear the burden of any road damage, injury to wildlife and diminution in aesthetic beauty. They must provide police and fire protection and community services to utility employees. Increased property taxes should offset these costs to the county. Local citizens also deserve compensation for the use of their natural resources.

Missouri is suffering from a long-term shortage of large animal veterinarians. This lack of available care can put animal health at risk. New policy supports fully funding the College of