

Mountaineer mascot finalist from Putnam hopes to represent all WVU fans

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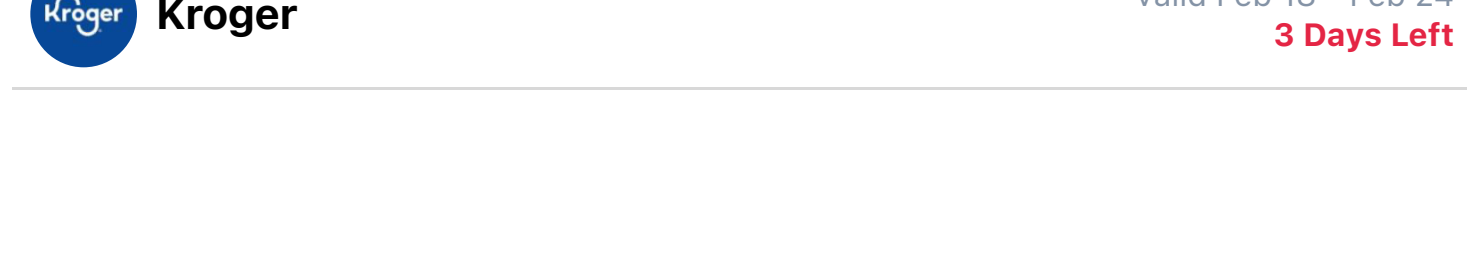


Finalists to become West Virginia University's mascot, the Mountaineer, are (clockwise from front left in this undated photo) Tanner Figgatt, Joel Hershman, Amelia Bolden and Reese Allen.

BRIAN PERSINGER | Courtesy of WVU

MORGANTOWN — Four West Virginia University students vying to become the 72nd Mountaineer mascot will compete in a cheer-off during the men's basketball game against Utah on Wednesday evening.

Among them is Putnam County native Tanner Figgatt.



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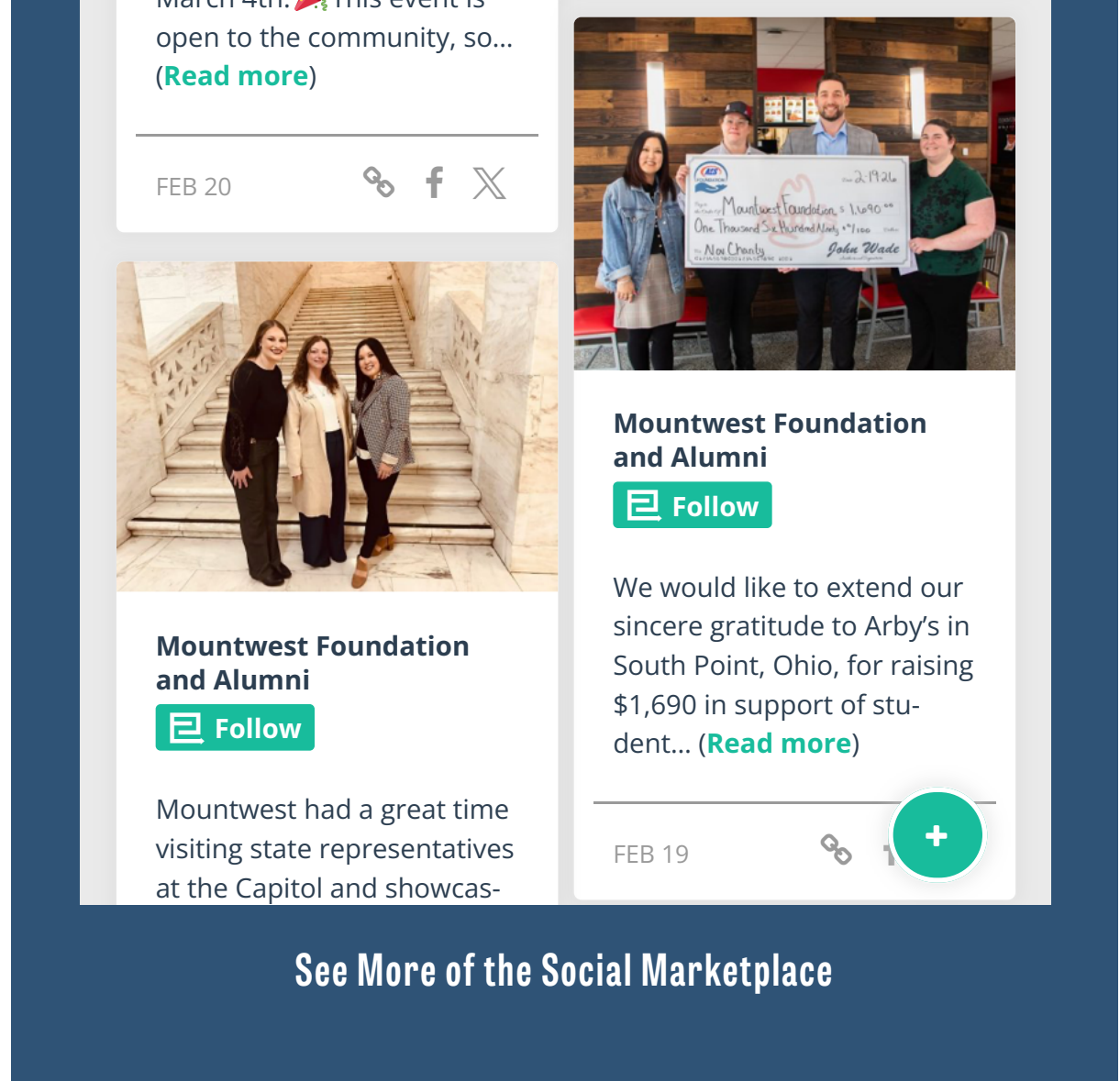
A Winfield graduate Fraziers Bottom and a member of the WVU Honors College, Figgatt is a freshman dual mechanical engineering and aerospace engineering major.



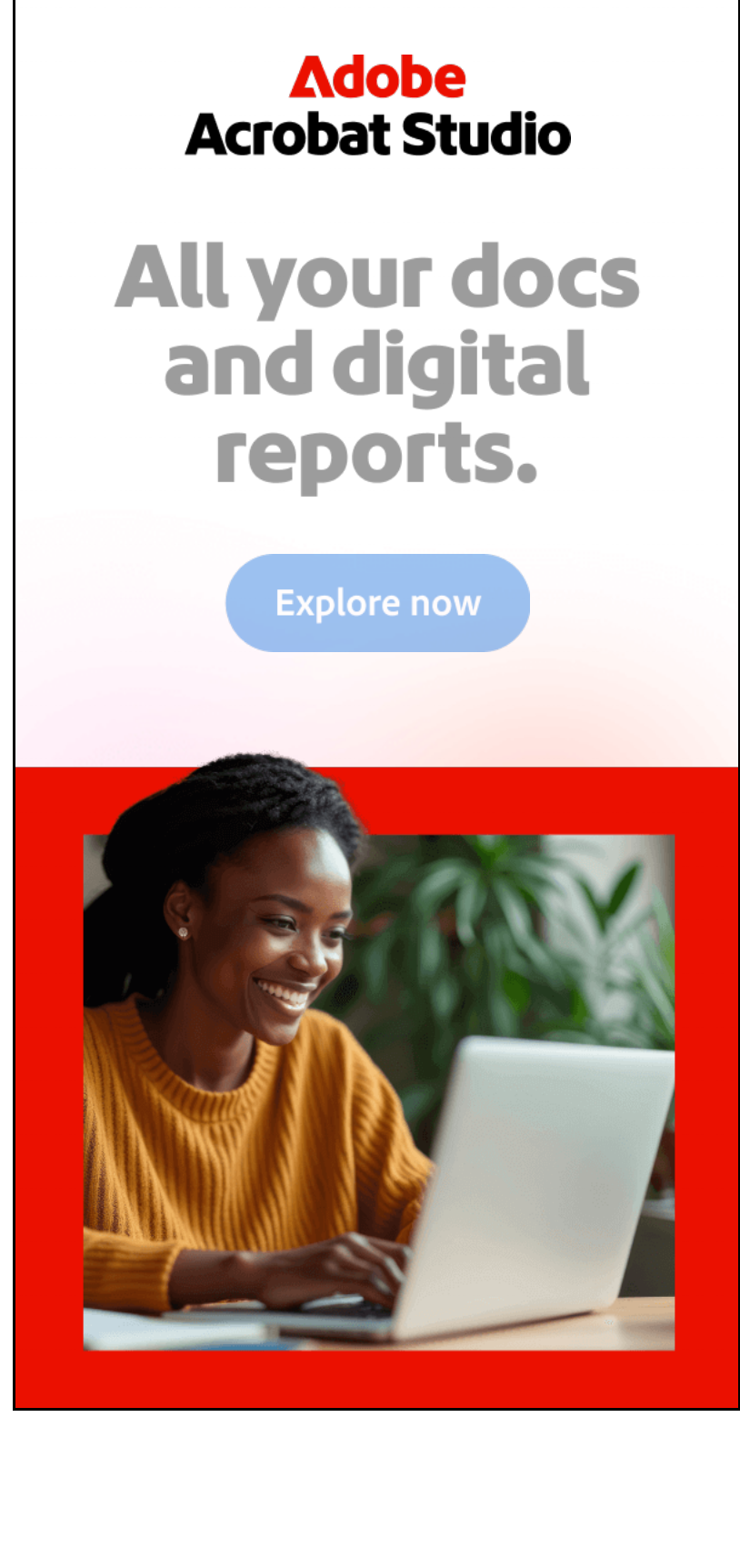
Tanner Figgatt, of Putnam County, shown in this undated contributed photo, is a finalist to be the 72nd WVU Mountaineer mascot for the 2026-27 school year.

BRIAN PERSINGER | Courtesy of WVU

He is a trumpet player in "The Pride of West Virginia," the Mountaineer Marching Band, and a student worker in the Lane Innovation Hub, according to a media release from WVU. He also serves as a member of the WVU Experimental Rocketry Club and CRU, the Christian campus ministry.



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He has managed his own leaf and lawn care business since 2019, according to the release.

"No matter where you come from in the state, it can be the smallest town in the state, or it can be the largest city, everybody is wearing something for West Virginia University," Figgatt said in the release. "As the Mountaineer, I will get to represent all of those people, people of different backgrounds, including the average guy."

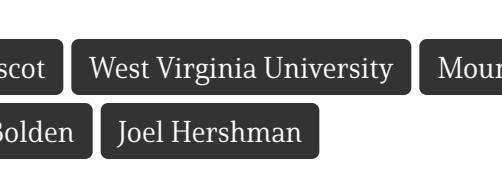
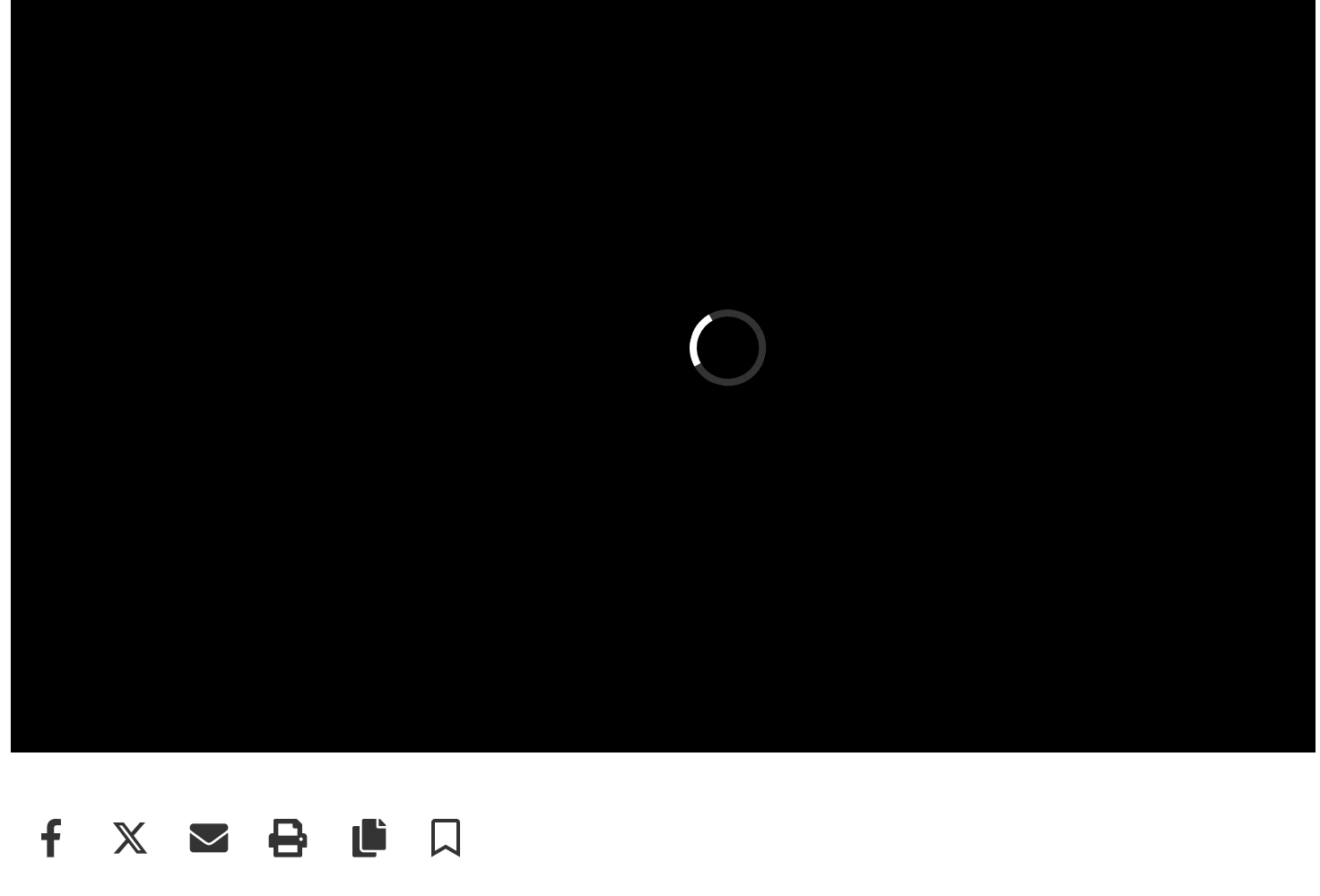
The other finalists are:

- Reese Allen, a senior dual mechanical engineering and data science major from Bridgeport, Harrison County
- Amelia Bolden, a first-year communication sciences and disorders junior with a minor in child development and family studies from Oakland, Maryland
- Joel Hershman, a junior dual sport, exercise and performance psychology and mental health and addiction studies major from Buckhannon, Upshur County

Selected by a committee of faculty, staff and students based on an essay and interview, the finalists will be judged on their performances and interactions with the crowd as they lead traditional game cheers Wednesday.

After this week's cheer-off, the selection committee will announce the winner — next year's Mountaineer — during the WVU men's home basketball game Feb. 28.

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