

## Friends In High Places

### Above And Beyond

Fundraiser Supports Valley Food Bank

By **NOLAN STOUT**

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**HARRISONBURG** — Allen Showalter didn't need to travel far to set up camp Tuesday morning.

Showalter is spending the next several nights on the roof of his business, King Photo Supply, to collect money and donations for the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank.

The "Up On A Roof" fundraiser, a program he started in 1993 to support local nonprofits, continues through Friday.

The Verona-based food bank serves 25 counties and nine cities in the Shenandoah Valley and Central Virginia, including Rockingham, Augusta, Page and Shenandoah counties and the city of Harrisonburg.

"There's no more basic human need than [having] enough to eat," Showalter said. "And the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank does such a good job."

Two buckets are strung down the side of the building at 889 E. Market St. for donations, and a Blue Ridge Area Food Bank truck is parked in front accepting donations of nonperishable food.

Showalter said donations are also being collected at the company's Waynesboro location at 1025 W. Main St.

Showalter is joined this week by J.R. Ruppel of the Harrisonburg Radio Group. The two are broadcasting on the group's seven stations to drum up support. "We're sprinkling in facts that we've recently learned about the mission that they have to keep the whole Valley and beyond fed," Ruppel said. "There are some just mind-boggling statistics that come out — stories about kids going hungry without the help, directly or indirectly, of Blue Ridge Area Food Bank."

The idea for the fundraiser started in the early 1990s when Showalter was in Myrtle Beach, S.C. He saw a radio DJ on the roof of a 7-Eleven collecting donations for charity and decided to emulate the event in Harrisonburg.

For years, the late Bill Phipps helped with the event. Phipps, a longtime **Bridgewater College** sportscaster, died in August. Showalter put his photo on the side of the building for this week's event.

"He was a partner up here from the very beginning," Showalter said. "Even when I visited just a few weeks before his death he was asking, making sure we'd done this and that to get ready."

Harrisonburg Rescue Squad, the Boys & Girls Clubs of Harrisonburg and Rockingham County and the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Free Clinic are a few of the nonprofits to benefit from the fundraiser in the past.

Showalter hopes to collect about \$3,000 this week, but it's not just about donations.

"It's mostly about bringing awareness to the food bank," he said. "It's more about telling their story than it is about their budget."

Todd Lilley, director of development for the food bank, said the fundraiser's timing is good, as donations typically decrease this time each year.

"At the end of the summer, going into the holiday season," he said, "this is a critical time we need to remind people we're out there."

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— **ALLEN SHOWALTER**

OWNER OF KING PHOTO SUPPLY



**ABOVE: King Photo Supply owner Allen Showalter (right) and WSIG-FM morning show host J.R. Ruppel chat Tuesday during a campout on the roof of the East Market Street business to raise money for the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank. BELOW: Showalter (left) and Ruppel broadcast live from the roof. The “Up On A Roof” fundraiser, which Showalter started in 1993, continues through Friday.**

Photos by Daniel Lin / DN-R