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# TOWN SQUARE LIVE

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**SNUFF MILL RESTAURANT COMING**



**JACK MARKELL NOMINATED**



**BLUE GOLD GAME**

PHOTO CREDIT: MATT TRUCKS

*Community*

TOWN SQUARE LIVE

Matt Trucks 2021

# DSU'S INSPIRE SCHOLARSHIP HELPS DAUGHTER OF FIREFIGHTER

BY BETSY PRICE



A bill on its way to Gov. John Carney will extend an scholarship program for qualified in-state students at Delaware State University by doubling what it now pays to cover tuition for a year.

One of the scholars it will help is the daughter of a Wilmington firefighter killed in the line of duty.

Ardavia Lee of New Castle was a sophomore in high school when her mom, Lt. Ardythe Hope, died in 2016 about 10 weeks after being injured in the Canby Park fire, started by arson.

Determined to go to Delaware State University like her father, David Lee, who is a nurse at the VA Hospital in Dover, Ardavia bore down on saving money She babysat and worked at Amazon, all while grieving for her mom.

After she was accepted to DSU, Ardavia received a letter from DSU telling her she qualified for the Inspire Scholarship. Confused, she handed the letter to her father and asked what it meant.

“I was like, dad, this looks like a whole lot of money. What does this mean?” she recalled. “He said, they’re

offering you this much...It just came in the mail.”

Since then, the Inspire Scholarship has meant \$16,272 paid toward her education as a political science major. She’s managed to pay the rest of her expenses out of her savings, without having to take out loans.

The Inspire Scholarships were started in 2010 as a way to reward and encourage Delaware students who make good grades and embrace community service to go to college. Freshmen retention among those who receive it has been 82%, well above other categories of students at DSU, the state’s only Historically Black College and University.

DSU president Tony Allen told the Delaware House of Representatives Tuesday that the scholarship has helped more than 2,500 young people. DSU data shows that 742 undergraduate students and 25 graduate students have earned degrees with the help of the Inspire program. Collectively, they’ve had a 3.36 grade point average and 160,000 hours of community service.

Allen said 44% of those who qualify for the Inspire Scholarship also qualify for federal Pell Grants, which are given to low-resource students. He said 34% of those receiving funds are first generation college students.

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# BIRD IN THE GRAND WORTH 2 IN PARKING LOT: INDOOR SHOWS RETURNING



BY BETSY PRICE

Intermission's about over.

With an appearance by comedian Brian Regan leading the way Sept. 26, The Grand Opera House on Tuesday announced the shows they've already booked for their indoor 2021-22 season, with the promise of more to be added.

"We've been waiting for this day for a long, long time," said executive director Mark Fields. "This is really just the first wave."

With Gov. John Carney announcing that he will lift his COVID-19 emergency order July 13, when it was set to run out, Fields said the facility is raring to go after having doors to its three stages shut for 467 days by the pandemic. Clever posters outside the Market Street theater cheekily proclaimed they would be right back after a brief intermission.

"This is what we consider a start on next season, but we didn't want to wait any longer before we provided things for people to start looking forward to," Fields said.

Unlike most years when the majority of the next year's season is announced in the spring, "I expect that one of the changes that we will see coming out of the pandemic is, is that we'll be announcing more shows as we go along than perhaps we have in the past."

Its season usually has about 70 shows, with most announced early. Tuesday's announcement offers about half that.

In addition to bringing in musical and variety shows, this announcement says its cast-iron front building's 150th birthday on Dec. 22 will be celebrated over three months.

There are a few spots open at Friends for 2021-22!

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# SNUFF MILL RESTAURANT TO OPEN IN INDEPENDENCE MALL IN JULY



BY PAM GEORGE

Most Brandywine Valley residents have traveled on Snuff Mill Road, a wooded route that winds from Route 52 in Chateau Country to the Red Clay Creek in Yorklyn.

Here you'll find the 19th-century ruins of Garrett Snuff Mill, which once produced powdered tobacco for inhalation. The familiar name is about to take on a new meaning.

Snuff Mill Restaurant is scheduled to open by mid-July in Independence Mall on Concord Pike.

Seasoned restaurateur Bill Irvin, executive chef Robert Lhulier and Joanne and David Govatos have partnered to create the 28-seat restaurant, which will also have a wine bar and a butchery.

Customers come in for a meal or to purchase cuts of beef, pork, lamb and poultry, along with charcuterie and cheeses.

The owners were inspired by the rural sensibility that a mill evokes.

“We want you to feel like you’re in the country somewhere, and we’ve set up a table for you,” explained Lhulier, who has worked for University & Whist Club, Domaine Hudson and Harry’s Savoy Grill. He was the opening chef at Deep Blue Bar and Grill, now Tonic Seafood & Steak.

The concept is “laser-focused,” said Irvin, who has owned or been associated with 16 Baltimore restaurants. In addition, he was a food-and-beverage director with the Ruth’s Chris Steak House and president of Phillips’ Seafood Restaurants.

“A typical restaurant menu might have 30 items on it—if not more,” Irvin said. “We’re going to focus on high-quality ingredients.”

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# WHEN HIS BRAIN GOES 'BOOP, BOOP,' GERVASIO RUIZ JR. KNOWS TO CLICK SHUTTER BUTTON



BY DANIEL LARLHAM JR.

Throughout life as a military brat, an artist for record covers, Revlon and L’Oreal, and even as a volunteer at the Kalmar Nyckel, one thing has been constant for Gervasio Ruiz, Jr. since his parents put a cheap camera in his hand at the age of 14. Photography.

Ruiz, 69, has won multiple photography awards throughout the state of Delaware in the last few years. Most recently, his work has been featured at the Biggs Museum of American Art in Dover and is now on display at the Dover Library as part of the Delaware Community Lens show.

Taking pictures, the Milford resident says, is one way to keep life interesting and it didn’t stop when he and his wife moved to Delaware.

“Ever since I’ve been here, I’ve had a lot more time,” Ruiz said, “I’ve really expanded multifold my involvement in photography.”

As a military brat, Ruiz spent most of his young life moving around, following the assignments of his father who was in the Air Force.

[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE!](#)



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# BEAUTY OF POPULAR JUNCTION AND BREAKWATER TRAIL DRAWS LOCALS, TOURISTS

BY JAMES DIEHL

Delaware has been in the top 10 of “bike friendly state” lists for the last decade, and on Friday, one more link in the network of bike paths will officially open.

The \$513,000 Junction and Breakwater Pathway Rehoboth Beach Extension will connect a 10-foot-wide asphalt trail from Canal Street to Rehoboth Avenue, among other enhancements, linking Rehoboth and Lewes.

Along with the newly opened Grove Park Dock near the Rehoboth Beach Museum that allows residents to easily commute by water between Rehoboth and Lewes, the bike path that tracks along an old railroad line gives those in the beach area alternatives to automobiles.

The Junction and Breakwater Trail also ties the resort’s glory days of locomotive travel to a 21st century method of staying in shape and enjoying the beauty of the local area.

It’s also a popular method of staying off area roads and out of what’s often bumper-to-bumper traffic during the summer months.

Running along the western edges of Cape Henlopen State Park, the Junction & Breakwater Trail winds through hardwood and pine forests, coastal marshes and open fields.

“The trail is really beautiful and is a great way for me to get my daily exercise,” says Charlie Cole, a frequent rider of that path. He uses the route about three times a week year-round.

“I really take the trail for the beauty of it, not only the forests and nature but also the people along the way who have spruced up the trail and made it inviting for everyone,” he said.

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*Government*

TOWN SQUARE LIVE

Balance & Appropriations

FY 2021 EXPENDITURES		FY 2021 BALANCES		FY 2022 APPROPRIATION LIMITS	
Total Spending Authority	\$5,068.2	Total Expenditures	\$4,502.9	FY 2022 Revenue Estimate	\$5,124.9
Less: Continuing Appropriations & Encumbrances from FY21	(\$518.8)	vs. FY 2021 Revenues	5,353.0	Unencumbered Cash Balance from FY 2021	\$975.2
Less: Reversions	(\$46.5)	Operating Balance	850.1	100% Appropriation Limit	\$6,100.1
Total Expenditures	\$4,502.9	Prior Year Cash Balance	959.4	98% Appropriation Limit	\$5,978.1
		Less: Budget Stabilization Fund (82 Del Law c 64; HB 225, Section 77)*	(\$63.1)	Prior 98% Appropriation Limit	\$5,906.6
		Cumulative Cash Balance	1,746.4	Increase (Decrease) from Prior Meeting	\$71.5
		Less: Continuing Appropriations & Encumbrances from FY 2021	(\$518.8)	Oct. 2020 98% Appropriation Limit	\$4,952.8
		Less: Budgetary Reserve Account	(\$252.4)	Increase (Decrease) from October 2020	\$1,025.3
		Unencumbered Cash Balance 6/30	\$975.2		

FY 2021 BUDGET	
Budget	\$4,547.0
Grants	\$54.5
Supplemental	\$35.4
Total Appropriations	\$4,636.9
Plus: Continuing Appropriations & Encumbrances from Prior Years	\$431.3
Total Spending Authority	\$5,068.2

FY 22 98% appropriation limit 29% higher than FY 21 appropriations

June 2021



# STATE'S 2022 BUDGET INCLUDES \$1,000 BONUS FOR EMPLOYEES, \$500 FOR PENSIONERS

The state pays employees every two weeks, but on leap years like 2022 when there are 29 days in February, the first paycheck will fall on Jan. 1. That effectively means the state will have to provide pay for 27 paychecks and is among \$71 million added to the state expenditures.

The employee bonuses are detailed in House Bill 251. It will spend \$221,121,200 to provide one-time funded projects through the Office of Management and Budget.

The main state budget, detailed in House Bill 250, totals \$4.771 billion. It does not include the state's grants-in-aid bill, which supports non-profits providing state services, and is expected to be \$57 million and the bond bill is expected to be a record \$894 million, which pays for transportation, capital projects and state infrastructure.

Members of DEFAC approved Fiscal Year 2022 expenditures of \$5,228.7 billion, citing strong growth in personal income tax for a variety of reason. The council also approved Fiscal 2022 revenues of \$5.124.9.

[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE!](#)

BY BETSY PRICE

With Delaware's revenue surplus holding steady at \$1.12 billion, state budget bills dropped into the General Assembly Friday include a one-time \$1,000 bonus for state employees and \$500 bonus for pensioners.

State employee expenses will soar in Fiscal Year 2022, which starts July 1, according to the final expenditure and revenue estimates by members of the Delaware Economic and Financial Advisory Council. It met Friday for the final time before its June 20 deadline of making recommendations to the General Assembly.

The employee expenditures will include raises to \$11 an hour for all state workers by Jan. 1, 2022; raises for teachers and paraprofessionals; the one-time bonuses for state employees and pensioners; and money to cover what many called the 27-paycheck year.

*Pamper Your Fur-Baby*

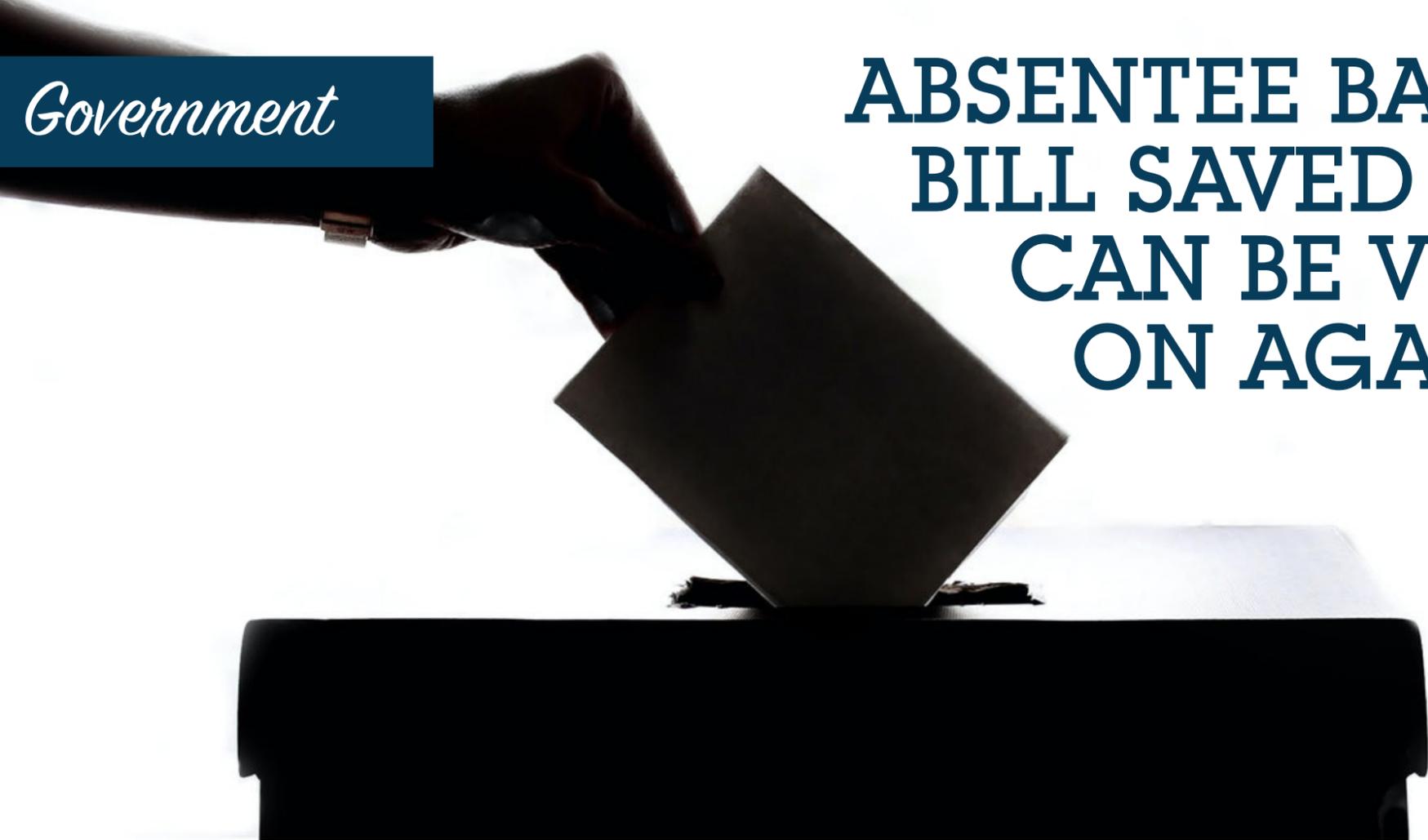
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# ABSENTEE BALLOT BILL SAVED SO IT CAN BE VOTED ON AGAIN IN 2022



BY BETSY PRICE

It's alive! It's alive!  
The bill that would allow absentee ballots to be used for any reason will not die, but will be able to come back before the Delaware House of Representatives in 2022, thanks to some little used political machinations.  
Because House Bill 75 would alter the state's Constitution, it must be passed in two separate sessions of the General Assembly. It passed easily in 2019 in the 150th session. But when it came up for a vote last week—now in the 151st session—it failed.  
House Republicans voted it down, even though the bill had bipartisan support in 2019. Several Republicans said that removing the ballots from the Constitution

would mean that absentee ballot rules could be changed by a simple majority vote in the legislature. That could mean the ruling party could make changes that would favor its party in elections, they said.  
When the bill did not pass, House Majority Leader Valerie Longhurst, D-Bear, switched her vote from yes to no. Then she asked Speaker of the House Peter Schwartzkopf, D-Rehoboth Beach, to end the session with three Republican bills left on the agenda.  
Longhurst's switch put her on the prevailing side of the vote—the nos—and gave her the right to ask for the bill to come back up instead of letting it die.

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The Delaware Breast Cancer Coalition (DBCC) has been connecting and supporting breast cancer survivors, and their families in communities across Delaware for over 30 years!

DBCC offers breast cancer survivors a variety of resources including: financial aid, personalized support, health programs, activities, and events with other breast cancer survivors to foster healing and recovery.



“The Delaware Breast Cancer Coalition was a big support to me – the peer mentor program was invaluable as I was paired with a young survivor around my age with the same diagnosis who was able to walk me through everything that was going to happen.”

“Just want you to know that the weekly zoom sessions I've found very helpful. They are allowing me to interact with people, which I am desperately missing right now.”

“A breast cancer diagnosis is always alarming and frightening. Knowing that DBCC is there to support and stand by people in our community who are faced with the disease is a tremendous comfort and invaluable resource.”

To learn more, volunteer, or to donate to support DBCC's work in our communities visit: [debreastcancer.org](http://debreastcancer.org)

# STATE AUDITOR SAYS PHARMACY BENEFITS COMPANY SHOULD PAY \$24.5 MILLION BACK



BY BETSY PRICE

Saying Delaware state employees paid three times the average drugs costs from 2018 through 2020, State Auditor Kathy McGuinness believes Express Scripts should pay Delaware back \$24.5 million.

“While the national drug inflationary rate was 4.7 percent during those three years, Delaware paid a 20.1 percent increase in prescription costs,” she said in a press release. “That’s an abuse of taxpayer dollars that should be returned to Delawareans.”

Efforts were unsuccessful to reach someone at pharmacy benefits manager Express Scripts for comment.

A bill already is going through the Delaware General Assembly that would address some of what McGuinness says is happening to drive up drug costs while enriching a pharmacy benefit company. House Bill 219 passed the House unanimously Thursday and is set to be heard in the Senate Banking, Business and Insurance Commission hearing Wednesday. Its summary says it is designed to

enhance oversight and transparency in dealings with pharmacy benefits managers.

Among other things, it would allow a pharmacist to decline to dispense a prescription drug if the amount reimbursed by a benefits manager than what it costs the pharmacy to get the drug, require a benefits manager to have a reasonable network of pharmacies, require reports on network adequacy and the amount of rebates received by the benefits manager, prevent some practices with the threat that the company’s registration can be revoked, and the benefit company’s registration and renewal fees.

Pharmacy benefit managers are hired by employers to manage prescription drug plans and are expected to contain costs by negotiating rates for prescription drugs with drug makers and pharmacies.

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# JACK MARKELL NOMINATED FOR AMBASSADOR ROLE TO ECONOMIC GROUP

BY BETSY PRICE

Former Gov. Jack Markell was one of 17 people nominated Wednesday for an ambassadorship or key job by President Joe Biden.

Markell, who served as governor from January 2009 to January 2017, was tapped to be the representative of the United States to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, which is headquartered in Paris. The appointment carries a rank of ambassador.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, whose members include 37 Democracies, is devoted to helping shape policies that foster prosperity, equality, opportunity and well-being for all, its website says.

“The U.S. mission to the OECD is a critical one, allowing the United States to come together with countries around the world, using policy analysis and economic data to solve our common problems and make our country a better place for all,” Markell said in a statement. “I am honored by President Biden’s trust in me, and if confirmed I look forward to getting to work on behalf of the American people.”



Markell, who had also been state treasurer of Delaware, is a former senior vice president of Comcast Corp. and Nextel Communications—a company whose name he coined. Since leaving office, he has served as president of Jack Markell Consulting, LLC. He also has served as chair of the National Governors Association, president of the Council of State Governments, and chair of the Democratic Governors Association.

Markell earned a bachelors degree in development studies and economics at Brown University and an M.B.A. at the University of Chicago.

A native of Newark, he and his wife, Carla, have two grown children, Molly and Michael. Markell is also an avid table tennis player and biker, who pushed for the development of Delaware’s growing number of bike trails.

The appointment requires confirmation by the U.S. Senate.



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PHOTO CREDIT: J&J PHOTOGRAPHY

FOOD

DRINK

*Food & Dining*

TOWN SQUARE LIVE



# HAVEN'T YET HAD CHEF CRYSS'S FABULOUSLY UNIQUE WINGS? LET US INTRODUCE YOU

BY AMY WHITE

There is one refreshing thing that Crystal Ashby and her food have in common—there ain't nothing subtle about either one.

Crystal—or “Chef Cryss” to her fans—is the 34-year-old celebrity chef at the heart of Middletown’s Crystal’s Comfort Food.

She greets me in a “Racist People Suck” T-shirt and giant wooden earrings that pay homage to Africa; the T-shirt is a statement in response to the anti-Black business commentary that exploded online after she and husband and co-owner, Steven Ashby, 38, made it clear they were keeping their mask mandate despite the governor’s lifting of the restriction.

“I’m happy to say 99 percent of our reception here in Middletown has been fantastic and crazy supportive, particularly with the other businesses closest to us,” says Crystal, who opened the doors of her soul food spot in late April to sell-out crowds. “But that other 1 percent? I just gotta light my sage, go outside and breathe.”

And then there is the food.

Take, for example, the champagne parmesan wings, which will have you questioning why every bottle of Moët Imperial doesn’t come standard with a side of chicken and cheese. Savory, sweet, surprising and exploding with effervescent warmth, they taste like nothing you’ve had before. The ring of molten golden elixir that remains at the bottom of the basket after the last bite might actually be a portal to another galaxy.

Add in her staples like award-winning sweet potato wings, risky payoffs like red velvet wings and culinary mashups like cheesesteak wings and taco wings, and it’s no surprise that Ashby is the East Coast’s reigning wing and sauce queen.

“The craziest thing is it’s all self-taught,” she says. “I’m not trained. I just grew up watching my grandmother and my aunts cooking for holidays or other events. Cooking was just something that I really enjoyed. I would always wonder, ‘Ok. What can I do with this?’

That’s how she came up with her sweet potato wings.

“I had never heard of this before my wife started working on it,” says Steven. “She was just like, ‘What about sweet potato wings?’ and went straight into the kitchen and started playing. First she tried a few different batters, and we were like, ‘Nah. That’s not it.’ Finally she landed on a dry rub and we’re like, that’s the one.”

That wing crushed the competition at WingFest in Philadelphia.

After word got out in their Lansdowne, Pennsylvania, hometown that Crystal’s cooking was not to be missed, the couple started hosting platter pop-ups and offered catering services.

But the demand made it clear—they needed a brick and mortar.

Crystal’s Soul Food’s landmark location, in Lansdowne, opened in 2017. Two years later, the Food Network came calling to invite the duo to fly out to California to compete in Season 12 of “The Great Food Truck Race.”

“I can honestly say I applied 50 times or more for the show, and this was before we were officially in business, when cooking was still just a hobby I loved,” Crystal says. “I said, ‘I could do that.’ I just had to be on it. Then we were out shopping one day and I got a notification that [Food Network’s] Tyler Florence started following me. Then I got the phone call.”

[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE!](#)

PHOTO CREDIT: FAUXELS FROM PEXELS



# Business

TOWN SQUARE LIVE

# MINIMUM WAGE HIKE BILL HEADS TO CARNEY FOR SIGNATURE

BY BETSY PRICE

A bill that will raise Delaware’s minimum wage to \$15 by Jan. 1, 2025, passed the House of Representatives June 17, and its next stop will be Gov. John Carney’s desk.

A last-minute flurry of amendments to Senate Bill 15 that would have allowed some groups to pay less or take longer to reach the full \$15 failed. Mostly, Republicans set ’em up and Democrats knocked ’em down as House sponsor Rep. Gerald Brady, D-Wilmington, declared every amendment “unfriendly.”

The hotly contested bill, originated in the Senate by Sen. Jack Walsh, D-Stanton, will raise minimum wage from \$9.25 an hour to \$10.50 on Jan. 1, 2022, then add another \$1.25 raise in 2023, a \$1.50 raise in 2024 and a \$1.75 raise in 2025.

Senate Bill 15 came to the floor at the end of the House’s five-hour session, which started with technical issues before really getting going.

In comments before the final House vote, Republicans revisited many of the issues they had before. This time, they added that there was little information to consult about the effect of raising minimum wage, and none of



it was from Delaware. Two of the failed amendments would have the controller general track results and report them.

With Democrats having a supermajority in the Senate and a majority in the House, the bill was always expected to pass. Dems argued that raising minimum wage would give people a better life, particularly women and minorities who traditionally have been paid lower wages than others.

Republicans and business advocates have said the bills will cost jobs because companies will lay off people, automate instead of hire and no longer hire teens. They also said the pandemic has undermined many businesses and they can’t afford yet-another expense.

After the bill passed, Rep. John Kowalko, D-Newark, asked to speak.

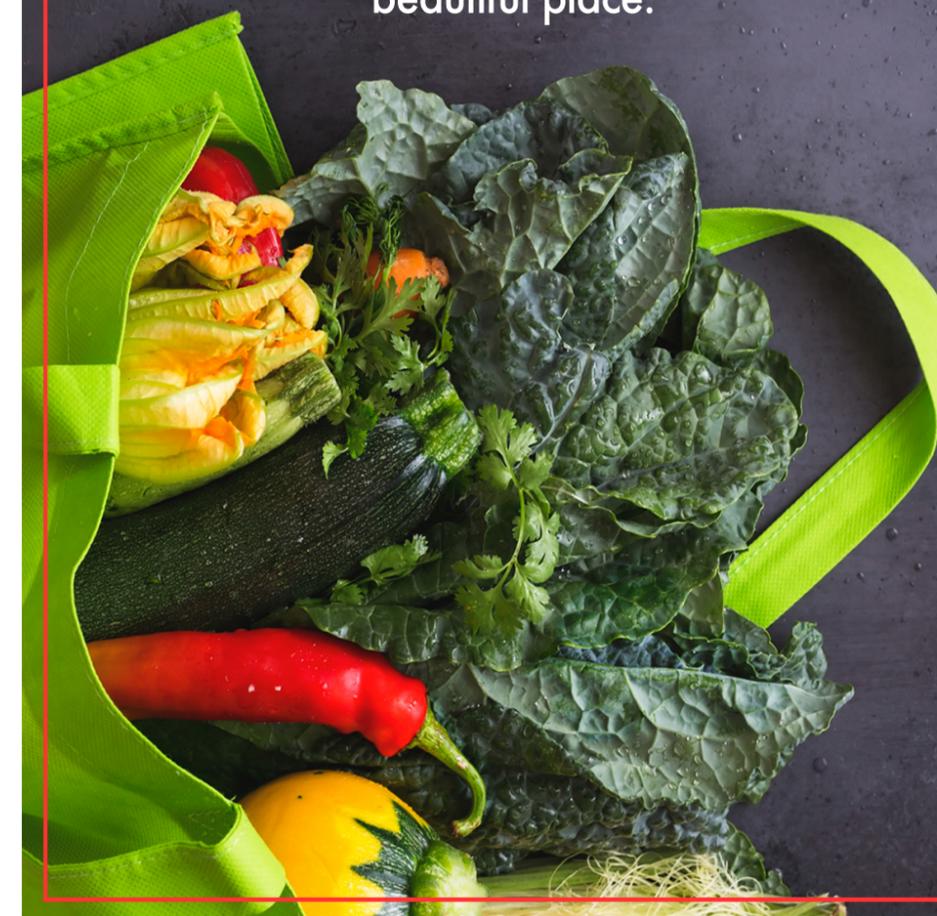
“If there are 1,000 businesses that will lose some money,” he said, “there are tens of thousands of workers enjoying the dignity of a fairer reach where they are.”

[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE!](#)

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**Kenny Family ShopRites of Delaware** care about the environment. Instead of using 650K single-use plastic bags a week, our customers have helped us reduce our plastic waste to just 100,500 reusable bags a week! We look forward to continue lowering that number with our customers’ support.

**Thank you for your commitment** to reducing plastic waste in our community, making our world a cleaner, more beautiful place.



# PRO-BUSINESS GROUP CHIDES COURTS FOR CLOSING ON JUNETEENTH DESPITE LITTLE DIVERSITY

BY BETSY PRICE

Citizens for a Pro-Business Delaware issued a press release Friday afternoon chiding the Delaware courts for closing to mark Juneteenth while the courts lack the diversity the business group wants to see.

“It’s a long overdue step for the federal government to recognize Juneteenth as a federal holiday and I admire President Biden’s leadership,” said Campaign Manager Chris Coffey. “But in Biden’s home state of Delaware, Gov. John Carney and state leaders have fallen far, far behind. Despite pressure from activists and civil rights leaders across the state, Carney and other leaders have failed to take the steps necessary to actually increase diversity in the state’s courts.”

Juneteenth became a national holiday this week, and Carney closed state buildings, including courthouses, to mark the day that slaves found out they had been freed by President Abraham Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation.

Efforts were unsuccessful Friday to reach a courts spokesman.

Citizens for a Pro-Business Delaware is a conservative group that rose in the wake of the Transperfect case before the Chancery Court.

In that case, the Shawe family that owned the language translation company were angry over the court’s order that it must be sold, which it was to owner Phil Shawe.

Since then, members of the Shawe family and the offshoot Citizens for a Pro-Business Delaware have worked against Carney’s election and been critical of the Chancery Court. The organization has spent hundreds of thousands of dollars lobbying for changes, including more diversity on the courts.

The press release called it “the height of hypocrisy” for the courts to close when its Bench and Bar Diversity Project has not responded to a request from the Rev. Al Sharpton and Pastor Blaine Hackett, pastor of St. John African Methodist Church in Newark, to meet with project leaders. Sharpton has worked with the business group before.

“Once again, Delaware’s elites are choosing talk over action and PR stunts over on-the-ground engagement,” Coffey said in the press release. “We won’t stop pushing until we see real action for diversity and justice.”

The pro-business group also has been critical of the low number of people of color who are serve on lower courts, which generally are the ones sentencing people to fines and prison time and that’s more often than not people of color.

Several recent appointments, however, have been to people of color.

The Chancery Court’s Vice Chancellor Tamika Montgomery-Reeves was nominated and approved for the Delaware Supreme Court, becoming the first Black person on it. The business group pointed out her move meant that the Chancery Court now has no racial diversity.

Reneta Green-Streets has become the first Black woman to serve as a Superior Court judge in Kent County.

[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE!](#)

Photo Credit: mentafagt from Pexels

# Education

TOWN SQUARE LIVE

# FIVE SCHOOL DISTRICTS, CHARTER SCHOOL LAUNCH PROGRAM TO HELP ALL WILMINGTON SENIORS THRIVE

BY BETSY PRICE

The five school districts serving a slice of Wilmington and a downtown charter school are joining efforts to help the city’s 500 rising seniors have the best senior year possible.

The new Boost’22 program will allow Wilmington seniors in the the Brandywine, Christina, Colonial, New Castle County Vo-Tech, Red Clay as well as Freire Charter School Wilmington to share educational programs and experiences such as college visits, regardless of which system offers them.

It will effectively make opportunities available to all Wilmington seniors, not just the few who live in a certain district.

While the program could help some catch up on lost learning, the real goal is to help launch the students into the next phase of their lives, said Dr. Jeffrey Menzer, superintendent of Colonial School District.

“If we can get students across the finish line with a diploma and a ticket to their next level, whether it’s college, career, workforce or the military, so that they’re going

to come out productive citizens in the community of Wilmington, that that’s kind of a win-win all around,” Menzer said. “It’s an immediate short-term investment in the future of Wilmington, and quite frankly we feel like it’s something that most people in the community can get around.”

Menzer said the idea grew from listening to Redding Consortium for Educational Equity discussions about challenges in the city of Wilmington.

It’s a tangible result for the consortium, which was born about two years ago.

“I am very excited and thrilled to see the announced and you have any credit for that given to Redding,” said Elizabeth “Tizzie” Lockman, a co-chair of the operating commission and founding member. “It really is very much in line with our vision.”

One of the things the organization hoped to do is spark conversations across districts and charter schools.

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*Health*

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**TOWN SQUARE LIVE**



# NO DEATHS FROM COVID-19 REPORTED IN LAST WEEK; WHERE TO BE TESTED, VACCINATED

BY BETSY PRICE

Delaware's COVID-19 new cases, percentage of cases testing positive and hospitalizations all continue to fall, as the state widens ways to get vaccines near your home.

Of note: No additional deaths were reported in the last week, with 1,679 Delawareans having died from the virus.

As of June 17, the state has had a total of 109,501 positive cases of COVID-19 among residents, but the seven-day average of new positive cases decreased to 30.6. The percentage of all tests that were positive is down to 1%, a drop from last week's 1.7.

In addition, only 26 people are hospitalized because of COVID, down 25 from last week. Four are critically ill, down nine from last week.

The spread of variants continues low, with most of the mutant cases being the British strain. The Delaware Public Health Laboratory has sequenced 3,127 specimens for

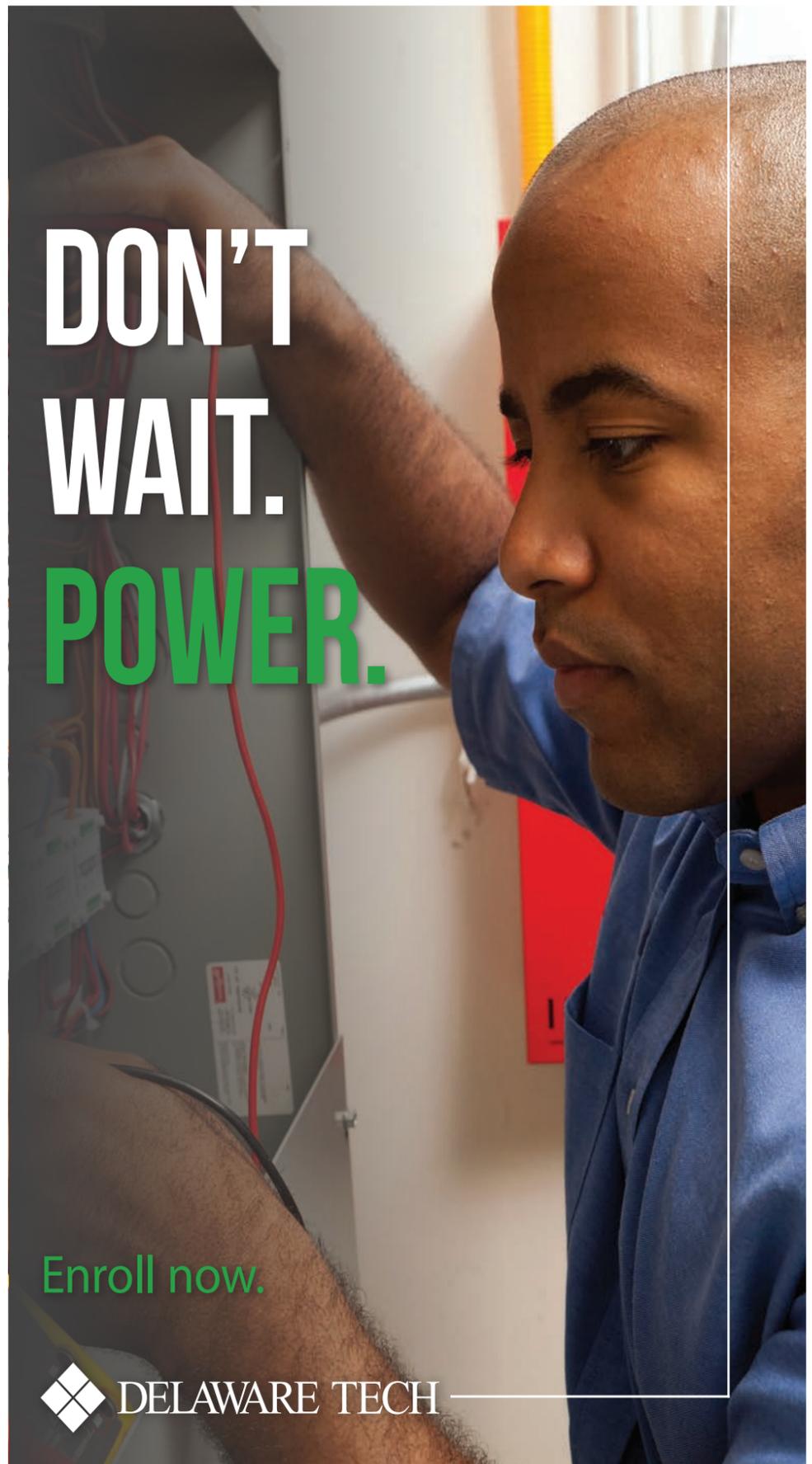
COVID-19 variant strains to date, including 75 within the past week.

The Indian strain, which health officials fear because is it more infectious, decimated India and has spread quickly in England, still is showing only 11 cases. More, however, are likely to be circulating, because not all positive cases are sequenced to find the origin of the infection.

### DE Wins!

Prize winners in the state DE Wins! contest have claimed a lot of prizes. While not all have agreed to be publicly identified, two more \$5,000 dollar prize winners, two winners of an Annual Park Pass from Delaware State Parks, and the winner of a Funland Prize Package have claimed their prizes.

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# CARNEY UNSURE STATE CAN MEET JULY VACCINATION GOAL; WILL END WEEKLY COVID PRESSERS

BY DANIEL LARLHAM JR.

Gov. John Carney said Tuesday that he's optimistic but not sure the state can vaccinate enough Delawareans before the Fourth of July to do its part to meet President Joe Biden's goal of having 70% of Americans with at least one dose of vaccine.

But the number of COVID cases, hospitalizations and deaths are declining so steadily, Carney said he feels comfortable enough to conclude the weekly COVID-19 press briefings he started in the spring of 2020.

Instead, he said, the state occasionally will hold single-topic press conferences on subjects such as returning to school.

As of Wednesday morning, 69.1% of all Delawareans ages 18 and older have received at least one dose of the vaccine. While the .9% that the state needs to reach the goal seems small, it means that the state needs to vaccinate roughly 7,000 people in just under two weeks.

Combined with a low demand for the vaccine in

younger age groups, the goal could be unreachable, officials said, even with DE Wins! That state program offers drawings for \$5,000 and other prizes for young people vaccinated recently as well as a grand prize for \$302,000 that will include the names of all Delawareans who have taken a vaccine.

Already six other states plus the District of Columbia have been able to meet their goal, so Carney said he and state officials are hopeful that Delaware will, too.

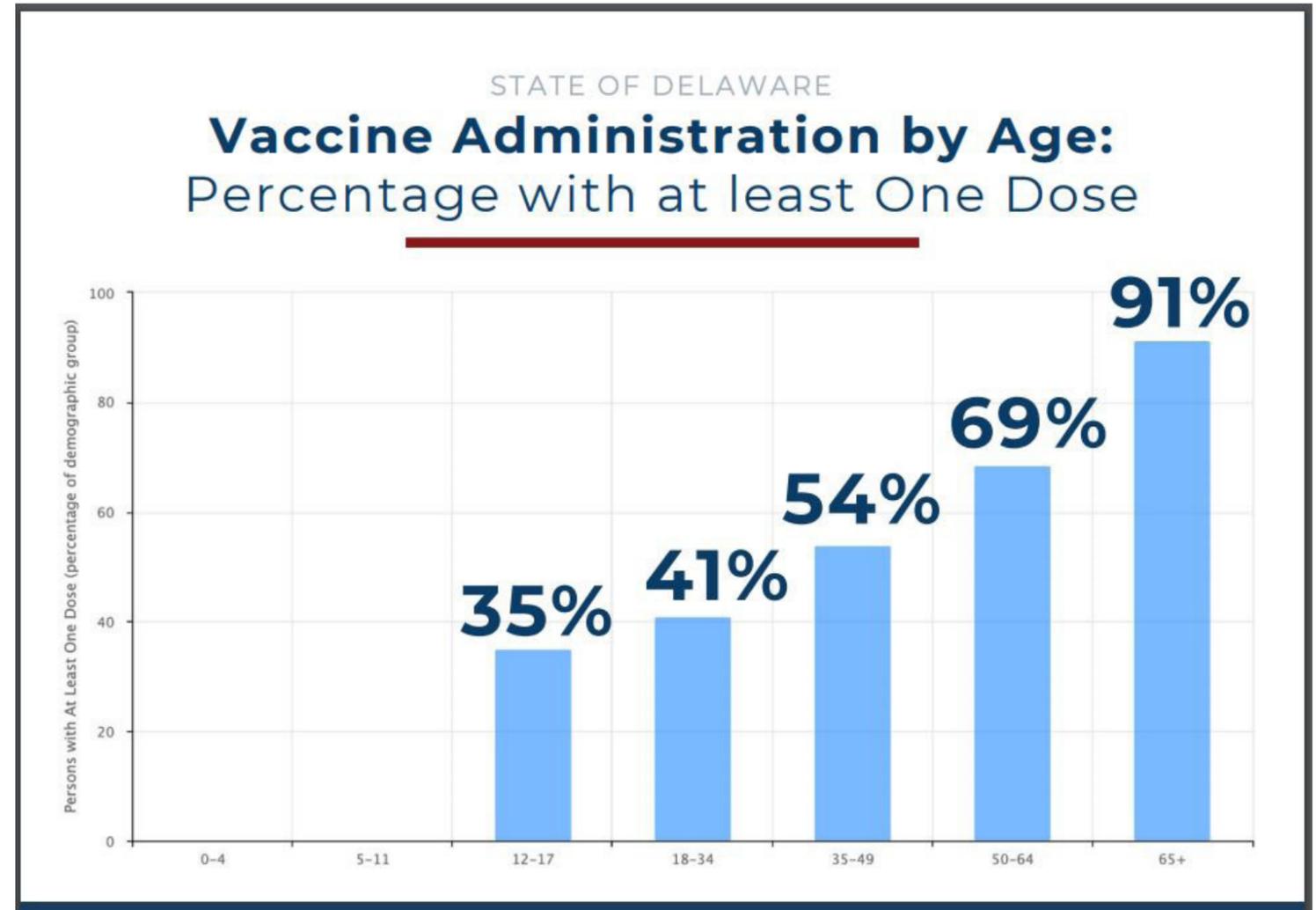
The governor said Biden's goal helped the state focus its vaccination efforts.

"I liked the idea of having a goal, really putting us on

a timeline to get there," Carney said. "Having us really concentrating on our efforts on getting first shots into people's arms. I think it's really focused our team."

It also doesn't mean that Carney has given up. He will visit the Walmart in New Castle today at 4:30 p.m. to promote COVID-19 vaccinations.

After July 4, regardless of whether the state reaches the goal, the state will continue vaccination efforts. The major difference will be that the state will focus more heavily on vaccinating adolescents to better protect children and educators for the upcoming school year.



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PHOTO CREDIT: PHOTO BY KAT WILCOX FROM PEXELS

**CRIME SCENE DO NOT CROSS**

*Police & Fire*

**TOWN SQUARE LIVE**

# 14 WILMINGTON GANG MEMBERS HIT WITH 120 CHARGES

BY BETSY PRICE

Fourteen members of the Wilmington gang have been indicted on more than 120 criminal charges, including six counts of murder, authorities announced Monday.

The indictment comes after a six-month long investigation involving the Delaware Department of Justice, Wilmington Police Department and New Castle County Police Department, and more agencies.

The six murder charges relate to deaths between Nov. 11, 2018, and April 21, 2021: Stephan Price, Taron Whaley, Ollier Henry, Taquan Davis, Shareef Hamilton and Dakevis Reed.

“Gun violence has devastated families across Wilmington and gangs play an outsized role in that carnage,” said Attorney Gen. Kathleen Jennings in a press release. “Disrupting gang activity is critical to restoring public safety in Wilmington, and that requires complicated, resource-intensive investigations.”

It wasn’t an easy job, she said, “but from the beginning, Wilmington and New Castle County were in with both feet.”

Wilmington Police Chief Robert J. Tracy credited partnerships with other agencies for the investigation’s success. They included the Delaware State Police, the Delaware Department of Correction, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the U.S. Attorney’s Office and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives.

“Through the implementation of evidence-based, proven crime reduction strategies, we have had great success identifying those responsible for driving gun violence in our city and throughout Delaware,” he said in the press release. “Indictments like these—the results of tireless investigations—help to prevent future violence and enhance public safety, while sending a clear and powerful message that gun violence and illegal gun possession will not be tolerated.”

Tracy said the indictments also are the result of enforcement efforts through Group Violence Intervention, in which “we blend the provision of social services and sharing of the moral voice of the community in an attempt to direct individuals away from crime and violence driven by senseless conflicts. Those who heed those warnings are provided support, while those who continue to engage in violence are held responsible through our enforcement efforts.”

New Castle County Police Chief Col. Vaughn M. Bond Jr. said, “Through these efforts violent offenders have been removed from our communities and the devastated families of our victims have the answers they deserve. Our state still has a significant challenge ahead in terms of violent crime.”

The NorthPak gang through it could get away with killing, said Rachel Byrd, acting special agent in charge of the FBI Baltimore Field Office.

“The citizens of Delaware have the FBI’s commitment that we will work with our local, state and federal partners to target and dismantle violent street gangs that threaten the safety and stability of our neighborhoods,” she said.

Tracy pointed out a few weeks ago that the city was heavily targeting people with illegal firearms. Many of those indicted had been prohibited from having firearms in the first place, said Tim Jones, special agent in charge of the ATF Baltimore office.

“A gun in the hands of someone who has made the decision to live a life of crime is a constant and serious threat to anyone they encounter,” Jones said.





*Sports*

**TOWN SQUARE LIVE**

LIVE



# GOLD CONTROLS GAME IN 21-13 WIN OVER BLUE IN 65TH DFRC ALL-STAR GAME

BY NICK HALLIDAY

It was a beautiful night for football at Delaware Stadium Friday for the return of the DFRC Blue-Gold All-Star game after an absence due to the pandemic in 2020. Eighty seniors from across the state would get together for one final game in Delaware and it would live up to the hype. A fourth down 17-yard touchdown pass from Gold Quarterback Aidan Sanchez to his Smyrna teammate Jeremiah Earl would prove to be the difference in the 21-13 win.

The Gold team controlled time of possession throughout the game but the Blue team would come up with some big stops deep in its own territory, including two fourth down stops from inside the two-yard line. The

Gold would get on the board first in the opening quarter as Dover's Qualeak Bumbry would punch it in from one yard out on fourth and goal (Vickers PAT). In the second quarter, the Blue team would answer. 2019 Delaware Player of the Year and Hodgson Quarterback CJ Henry, would find the talented wide receiver from Howard, Tyaire Spencer, for a 27-yard touchdown down the right sideline (Spsychalski PAT) to tie the game at seven. Another Blue team defensive stop on fourth and goal would keep the score 7-7 at the half.

It was all Gold in the second half as the scoring would begin with the Smyrna teammates.

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# POST ONE DEFEATS FOX POST TWO 13-3

BY BETSY PRICE

Fox Post 2 made the trip up north to face Post 1 last night at St. Mark's Alessandrini Field—prior to the game Post 1 celebrated and honored the 2018 ALWS winning coach Brett Treml and some of his players. They presented Coach Treml with the new Post 1 jersey #18 and retired that number from future use on the team in remembrance of the 2018 Championship. They also had him throw out the first pitch prior to the National Anthem being played to celebrate Flag Day that was on Monday June 14th and to officially open our season at this 1st home game of the year for Post 1.

RHP Gerrett Quinn got the start for the home team Post 1 and quickly went to work holding Fox Post scoreless until the top of the fourth inning when Fox plated a run off a few hits by Mendez, Martin, and Rodriguez. Quinn settled in and struck the next two batters out to hold off Fox from scoring again in the inning.

Post 1 scored often and early with a big second inning that saw Post send five runs across the plate. Post 1 catcher Max Autry went four for four on the night with a pair of doubles and contributed to three RBI.

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