

*Photo credit: Mt. Cuba Center*

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*February 24, 2022  
Vol. 3, Issue 8*



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*Photo credit: Longwood Gardens*

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**STATE PARK FEE SEASON BEGINS  
MARCH 1**



**AVIAN FLU FOUND ON POULTRY FARM**



**HOWARD BOYS' BASKETBALL WINS**

*Photo credit: Delaware Art Museum*



*Community*

**TOWN SQUARE LIVE**

# NEWARK TO CONDUCT RECYCLING AUDITS BEGINNING FEB. 24



BY CHARLIE MEGGINSON

Newark will begin conducting “recycling audits” during regularly scheduled recycling pickups, the city announced Tuesday. In a press release, city officials said audits are necessary in order to improve the city’s compliance with Delaware Solid Waste Authority guidelines relating to recycling contamination.

“Delivering clean recyclable materials to the Recycle Center allows the city to avoid costly penalties imposed by DSWA when acceptable limits are exceeded,” the statement reads.

During the Feb. 17 and 18 routes, public works employees will review container contents specifically searching for bagged recycling. Bagged recycling has been identified as the primary contributor in contaminated truckloads delivered to the recycling center. As a courtesy over the next two weeks, employees will empty

cars completely and leave a tag on the cart with a written explanation of the error. Beginning March 10, bagged recyclables will be removed and placed next to the refuse cart.

Other commonly misplaced items that may be identified and removed during the audit are listed below. These items should be placed in the trash cart.

- Styrofoam
- Tanglers, such as ropes or hoses
- Plastic grocery bags
- Shredded paper

“The city of Newark is committed to being a good partner in recycling to its residents as well as the state,” said Jason Winterling, Newark Public Works superintendent. “The biggest mistake we observe weekly is improperly bagged recyclables. It is our hope that this outreach and

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forthcoming audit helps to improve the recycling habits of our residents as well as improve the product delivered to DSWA, reducing our fines in the long term.”

Adhesive stickers have been placed on each recycle cart that visually demonstrates what is and is not considered single-stream recycling. Residents are encouraged to contact Public Works and Water Resources Department at 302-366-7000 if they have questions about recyclable products. DSWA residential recycling guidelines can also be found [HERE](#).





# STATE PARK FEE SEASON BEGINS MARCH 1

is available for Delawareans ages 65 and older. Reduced rates are also offered to residents who receive public assistance, or who are active duty military or veterans. Active duty military personnel with an out-of-state license plate can purchase an annual pass at the in-state rate. Those who purchase annual passes online will receive a virtual pass that can be used up to 30 days from the date of purchase until the actual pass is received via mail.

Off-peak surf fishing permits are also available for purchase and double as an annual pass for entry into any state park in Delaware. Off-peak surf fishing permits may be used seven days a week except for weekends and holidays from Memorial Day to Labor Day.

The off-peak permit fee for Delaware residents is \$70, while the fee for out-of-state residents is \$140. Delaware residents age 62 and older receive a discounted rate of \$60.

Revenue generated from sales of passes and permits is used to manage 17 state parks, the Brandywine Zoo, and more than 26,000 acres of state parklands.

Park users generate 65% of the revenue utilized to operate and maintain the parks. The revenue is used for trail maintenance, environmental and recreational programs, visitor amenities, guarded beaches, management of campgrounds, cabins and more.

To purchase an annual pass or off-peak surf fishing permit, click [HERE](#).



## BY CHARLIE MEGGINSON

When does winter end? Google says March 20. Punx-tawney Phil says March 16. DNREC says March 1.

That's the day Delaware State Parks will transition from the winter free-season to the summer fee-season. The fee season will remain in effect until Nov. 30, 2022.

State park entrance fees for vehicles registered in Delaware are \$4 at inland parks and \$5 at ocean parks. Fees for out-of-state vehicles are \$8 at inland parks and \$10 at ocean parks.

Daily park entrance fees may be paid using credit card machines at most park locations, cash where fee attendants are on duty, or via self-registration envelopes provided at park entrances that are then placed in designated secured drop boxes.

Annual passes are also an option for folks who plan to visit Delaware State Parks throughout fee season. A resident annual pass costs \$35 and residents ages 62 and older receive a discounted rate of \$18. A \$65 lifetime pass



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“ We saw a boost in website referrals from Delaware LIVE during our admission season. ”

- URSULINE ACADEMY

# GREEN DAY, MY CHEMICAL ROMANCE, DUA LIPA, HALSEY TO HEADLINE FIREFLY FESTIVAL

BY CHARLIE MEGGINSON

Green Day, My Chemical Romance, Dua Lipa and Halsey will headline the 2022 Firefly Festival, which will return to the Woodlands at Dover between Sept. 22 and 25.

The 2022 festival will be only the second to be held in the early fall. The event—previously held annually in June—was moved to September in 2021 due to the pandemic. COVID forced festival organizers to cancel the event in 2020.

“After last year’s rapturous return, Firefly 2022 is packed full of everything that makes the festival so special—incredible sets from iconic artists, the best food and beverage offerings within the Delaware Valley, treehouse DJ sets, spirited drag brunches and a joyful pride parade; unique, moments that give Firefly its characteristic sense of fun, flare and community,” said festival organizers in a press release.

Fans appeared to have mixed thoughts on the lineup after it was posted to the Firefly Facebook page Tues-

day. “Trash lineup as usual. Glad I’m going to Lost Lands instead,” wrote one festivalhead.

“I only know 5 people in this whole list,” wrote another. “No Stevie Nicks or a similar big name?? Pretty underwhelming for a 10th anniversary lineup,” wrote one fan, whose comment earned discontent from some other Facebook users.

“Green Day is one of the biggest names in rock lol,” one fan responded. Another followed up, saying, “right!? So is Weezer!”

“Their line up is actually decent this year...you all down???” said one.

**Presale** for the festival will begin Friday, Feb. 25, at 10 a.m. Presale wristbands cost \$299 for a regular weekend pass, \$739 for a VIP weekend pass and \$2,699 for a Super VIP weekend pass.



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# PHILLIE PHANATIC CELEBRATES READING WITH URSULINE STUDENTS

BY SUSAN MONDAY

Ursuline Academy found a way to lure their youngest students away from screens during the cold, snowy month of January. The private school in Wilmington jumped at the chance to be part of “Snow Much Reading with the Phanatic,” just one piece of the Lower School’s multi-year literacy initiative.

Principal Samantha Varano says the goal is to “reignite a love for reading and writing” with a different campaign each month.

Varano says there was a decline in students’ reading ability when Ursuline went virtual during the early stages of the pandemic. She didn’t want to waste any time getting students back up to speed.

In the fall, the school’s “One School, One Book” initiative asked all Lower School students and their families to read the same book, “The Water Horse.”

Varano says she was excited about a change of pace when the Phillies’ organization contacted the school.

Ursuline’s “Snow Much Reading” program was unveiled in early January 2022 with a billboard in the school’s lobby.

Here’s how it worked: For every 60 minutes a student spent reading, he or she would get a snowball posted on the billboard. Every Friday, the students would calculate how much they read on their log and submit their numbers.

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# NORTH WILMINGTON, NEWARK LIBRARIES TO GET NEW BUILDINGS

- \$4 million to the Newark Public Library for a new building
- \$3 million to the Rehoboth Beach Public Library for upgrades

“Governor Carney’s strategic investment in libraries supports equity for communities throughout the state,” said Dr. Annie Norman, state librarian. “Delaware Libraries are shovel-ready to strengthen the social services infrastructure for digital equity, workforce development, and more statewide.”

Carney’s recommended Bond Bill for fiscal year 2023, which begins July 1, includes an additional \$26.8 million in state funding to match the federal funding for the five new libraries.

The American Rescue Plan Act Capital Relief Fund, was signed into law by President Joe Biden on March 11. Capital Relief projects paid for under the Rescue Plan can only be used for projects that enable work, education and health monitoring. They also must respond to issues created or exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Delaware received \$925 million in Rescue Plan money. The U.S. Department of the Treasury has approved Delaware’s plans to invest in libraries statewide, the press release said.

“Delaware’s libraries serve our communities with resources, collaboration and creativity,” Carney said. “Many of these investments are in our communities hit hardest by the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced the central role libraries serve in our communities as hubs for job training, employment searches, education, COVID-19 test kit distributions and vaccination sites. I want to thank the Congressional delegation for their advocacy and look forward to seeing significant results from these investments.”

Additional capital awards funded by ARPA will be announced soon, the press release said. To see what’s already been funded, go [HERE](#).

**BY BETSY PRICE**

Thanks to American Rescue Plan Act bucks, the Selbyville Public Library will be able to build a new library and move out of the stately home in which it’s now housed.

Selbyville is one of nine Delaware libraries up and down the state that will share \$40 million in American Rescue Plan Act funds, according to a press release from Gov. John Carney’s office. All of it will be used for new construction and improvements to existing structures.

The projects include:

- \$7 million to the Selbyville Library for a new building
- \$5.6 million to the Harrington Library for a new building
- \$750,000 to the Lewes Public Library for a new outdoor pavilion
- \$900,000 to the Milford Public Library for updates to HVAC, filtration, and ventilation
- \$250,000 to the Georgetown Public Library for updates to HVAC, filtration, and ventilation
- \$7.8 million to the Friends of Duck Creek Regional Library to build an expanded library
- \$11 million to the North Wilmington Library for a new building



*Photo by Christina Monillo from Pexels*

*Business*

**TOWN SQUARE LIVE**



# AVIAN FLU FOUND IN POULTRY FARM AFTER INCREASED BIRD DEATHS THERE

BY BETSY PRICE

The Avian flu has been found in a Delaware poultry farm that was experiencing increased bird deaths.

The state announced Tuesday that the Euroasian H5N1 avian influenza (HPAI) had been found in eight wild ducks, a hawk and a Canada goose.

Wednesday the state announced that it's been confirmed in the poultry farm, which will have to kill all the rest of its birds to try to prevent the spread to other farms.

Backyard flock owners who have sick or unusual deaths in their flocks should email [Poultry.Health@delaware.gov](mailto:Poultry.Health@delaware.gov) or call (302) 698-4507 for assistance, the state said.

This finding is the first case of HPAI in commercial poultry in Delaware since 2004, the state Department of Agriculture said in a press release. There is no public

health concern, and avian influenza does not affect poultry meat or egg products, which remain safe to eat, the state stressed. While bird flu can be spread to humans, there has not been a transmission to humans in the U.S.

"We have taken immediate action to contain this disease and will continue to work with poultry owners, the industry, and our laboratory partners to protect against its spread," said Delaware Secretary of Agriculture Michael T. Scuse in the press release. "This appears to be an isolated case, with no reports of disease among our chicken industry. Delmarva poultry is safe to eat, and consumers can be confident in the safety of their food."

The Delaware Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Agriculture will increase sampling and quarantining nearby poultry flocks.

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Avian influenza is an airborne respiratory virus that spreads easily among chickens through nasal and eye secretions, as well as manure, the state said. The virus can be spread in various ways from flock to flock, including by wild birds, through contact with infected poultry, by equipment, and on the clothing and shoes of caretakers.

The farm is under quarantine to stop the spread. The birds on the affected farm will be killed to prevent the spread of disease, the state said.

In addition, because of the severity of this avian influenza, anyone found trespassing on a quarantined farm will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law, the state said.

[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE](#)

# RESTAURANTS WRESTLE WITH PRICING TO COVER INDUSTRY COST HIKES

BY PAM GEORGE

Since Valentine's Day was on a Monday, many restaurants had four nights of solid reservations. The business was welcome, considering that most experienced a disastrous January due to mask mandates, bitterly cold weather and ailing staff.

But a boost in reservations is not enough to sustain an industry hit hard by the pandemic, staffing shortages, supply chain issues and soaring overhead prices. To put it simply: Restaurants are hurting.

Actual sales in 2022 are projected to remain below 2019 levels in all major segments, from quick-serve eateries to full-service restaurants, according to the [National Restaurant Association's](#) "The State of the Restaurant Industry 2022."

Nationwide, more than 90% of operators say food

costs are higher than before COVID-19; eight in 10 report that labor costs are up. Both will continue to rise in 2022. "We've seen huge price increases," said Scott Stein, who with chef Antimo DiMeo owns [Bardea Food & Drink](#) in downtown Wilmington. "Everyone we order from is having shortages, and we are paying a premium—everything we order is handpicked."

This week, Bardea added a 5% surcharge to checks to help cover rising costs. The popular eatery, featured on the "Today Show," is not the only restaurant getting creative to make ends meet.

The next 12 months will be a "fragile" time for the industry, said Carrie Leishman, president and CEO of the [Delaware Restaurant Association](#). "You're going to see a lot of different models out there," she said.

## A worldwide issue

Price increases and supply chain issues affect most sectors, but unlike many industries, restaurants had a slim profit margin before COVID. On a good day, it was between 3% and 5%.

When restaurants were closed or limited to takeout, the Paycheck Protection Program kept [Piccolina Toscana](#) in Trolley Square and [Brandywine Prime](#) in Chadds Ford afloat, said owner Dan Butler. "I was thrilled with it," he said.

But after the economy reopened, employees were slow to return to the hospitality industry, and that's led to wage increases.

At [Snuff Mill Restaurant, Butchery & Wine Bar](#) in Brandywine Hundred, employees who work at least 33 hours get health insurance, a gym membership and a monthly dinner out. And that's just to start. "We have to be very competitive against people like Amazon," said Bill Irvin, an owner.

Similarly, Bardea gives full-time employees two weeks of paid vacation each year, healthcare benefits and a 401K.

The quick-service sector also has been impacted. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, most fast-food chains raised wages by up to 10%.

The supply chain is another significant thorn in restaurants' sides. Paying 50 cents extra per pound of beef puts a severe dent on the bottom line, said Irvin. "It comes right out of our pocket; we're absorbing those costs," he said.

[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE](#)

*Photo by Jonathan Borba for Pexels*



*Food & Dining*

**TOWN SQUARE LIVE**



## 2 DELAWARE CHEFS ARE SEMIFINALISTS FOR JAMES BEARD AWARD

BY PAM GEORGE

The James Beard Foundation announced the 2022 James Beard Award **semifinalists** today, and two Delaware chefs, Antimo DiMeo and Bill Hoffman, made the list for Best Chef Mid-Atlantic.

DiMeo is executive chef and co-owner of **Bardea Food + Drink** in downtown Wilmington. Chef Bill Hoffman and his wife, Merry Catanuto, own the **House of William & Merry** in Hockessin.

The prestigious awards are the culinary equivalent of the Oscars, and earning even a nomination can boost a career and increase restaurant traffic.

Both chefs were over the moon after learning the news. “I’m still in shock; I’ve had goosebumps all morning,” said DiMeo, who owns Bardea with Scott Stein. “This has been a dream of mine since I started cooking at 19—

seeing my name on the Best Chef list. I saw it today, and I lost it.”

When the partners opened Bardea, they joked that their mission was “Beard or bust.” In 2019, Bardea was a semifinalist for the Best New Restaurant Award.

Hoffman was making bread when he got a phone call from Meghan Lee, owner of Heirloom in Lewes.

“She said, ‘Dude, you’re on the list,’” he said.

Hoffman couldn’t believe it. He and Catanuto have owned the House of William & Merry for 11 years, and he’d just about given up on an award. But he kept his head down and continued to produce beautiful food.

Admittedly, the last two have been challenging for all restaurants.

[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE](#)

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*Photo from Getty Images*



*Government*

**TOWN SQUARE LIVE**



# CORRECTIONS SUMMIT ENDS WITH APOLOGY TO INMATES, FAMILIES

BY CHARLIE MEGGINSON

A two-day virtual summit on Delaware’s correctional system ended with Sen. Marie Pinkney apologizing to current and former inmates for perceived failures in the state’s criminal justice system.

“To those who have been involved in our justice system or to those that love people that have been involved in our justice system, we apologize for where we failed you,” the New Castle senator said. “We will continue to do everything we can to make that right and to create better systems and opportunities moving forward.”

The summit, which took place Tuesday and Wednesday, featured national speakers, a community listening session and a series of roundtable discussions.

They addressed the physical and mental wellness of incarcerated people, the impacts of the juvenile justice system, the experiences of correctional staff and the state’s expanding re-entry programs.

The event included presentations from the Delaware Department of Correction, Department of Labor, Department of Services for Children, Youth and their Families, Office of Defense Services, ACLU Delaware, Delaware Center for Justice, Wilmington Hope Commission and the Group Violence Intervention Project.

Pinkney kicked off the summit Tuesday morning by asking attendees to refrain from using the word “inmates,” and encouraged them to instead say “incarcerated people.”

“One of our ground rules which I’ll probably discuss prior to every panel is that we will not be using the term ‘inmate’ at all for these next two days,” Pinkney admonished. “We will speak about people as if they are valued human lives, so there will be correcting if you hear the term ‘inmate’ because we are going to make it known that we value human life.”

[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE](#)

## Cancer isn’t waiting for COVID-19 to be over.

One in three Delawareans will get cancer. Unfortunately, many have put off their cancer screenings in the past year. Screenings detect cancer early, when it’s most treatable. If you’ve skipped or canceled a screening due to the pandemic – for breast, cervical, colon, lung, or prostate cancer – don’t wait one more day. **Call your health care provider to schedule your cancer screenings today.**

If you don’t have a provider, we can help. If you are uninsured or underinsured, you may be eligible for free screenings. To learn more about eligibility requirements and recommended cancer screenings, and other information, please visit [HealthyDelaware.org/Cancer](https://HealthyDelaware.org/Cancer).

**To schedule your cancer screening by phone:**

Call your health care provider, dial 2-1-1, or speak directly with a nurse navigator at the health system nearest you, below.

- ChristianaCare: 302-216-3557
- Bayhealth: 302-216-8328
- Beebe Healthcare: 302-291-4380



# Government



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Amended Return  
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Spouse Taxpayer ID \_\_\_\_\_

Filing Status (Must check one)

1.  Single, Divorced, Widow(er) 2.  Joint 3.  Married & Filing Separate Forms



## DE TAX BOOKLETS DELAYED IN DELIVERY TO LIBRARIES

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

A problem with paper supplies has delayed the printing and distribution of Delaware’s personal income tax booklets. Public libraries got their first copies on Tuesday.

The state ordered 30,000 resident tax booklets and 10,000 non-resident tax booklets. “Paper copies of Delaware tax forms were delayed because the printer did not have the necessary paper available,” a representative of the Delaware Division of Revenue said. Taxpayers who want the booklets mailed to them should call 302-577-8209 or email formsrequest@delaware.gov.

Most taxpayers file electronically, and the state has over the years cut back on mailing tax booklets and delivering them to post offices and stores. Roughly 600,000 returns will be filed in 2022, and last year about 8% of returns were filed on paper.

“Due in part to the pandemic, the Delaware Division of Revenue anticipates delays in processing paper

returns for the 2022 filing season,” according to the division [website](#). “As a result, please consider filing your return electronically instead of submitting a paper return.”

Paper is one of the many products encountering logistical issues in the pandemic. The most famous case was with toilet paper, but problems have also occurred with [paper towels](#), [wedding invitations](#) and [wine labels](#).

“Paper mills and merchants are projecting allocations and continued limited supplies well into 2022,” according to [Takach Paper](#). “However, as paper mills work to replenish inventories and demand levels off, most experts anticipate some relief after the second quarter, with pulp and wood prices likely to moderate.”



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# DEADLY BIRD FLU FOUND IN DELAWARE DUCKS, GOOSE, HAWK

BY BETSY PRICE

A highly infectious bird flu that can rapidly kill domestic poultry including chicken, turkeys and ducks, has been found in eight wild ducks, a Canada goose and a hawk. The discovery has triggered a warning to hunters, poultry owners and poultry producers to take precautions in handling the birds.

The Eurasian H5 Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza can be transmitted to humans, but no human infections have been found in the United States. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention considers the risk to the general public from HPAI H5 infections to be low.

The discovery of the virus was not unexpected because the Mid-Atlantic is part of a giant flyway through which birds migrate south in fall and winter and then back north again in spring. Wild birds can be infected, but not show signs. However, the E5 virus can make domesticated birds very sick, spread quickly and cause death. Avian influenza is not linked to the COVID-19 virus (SARS-CoV-2).

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service confirmed the Eurasian H5 strain in eight wild ducks and a Canada goose in Kent County, as well as one red-shouldered hawk in New Castle County. All the ducks

found to have the avian influenza—including five northern shovelers, one American wigeon, one black duck and a gadwall—were harvested by hunters and submitted to APHIS for sampling. The Canada goose was dead when submitted for testing, while the red-shouldered hawk was tested after it had been taken to Tri-State Bird Rescue for rehabilitation. The USDA, DNREC and others will implement additional avian influenza surveillance and testing.

Eight other states in the Atlantic Flyway have found avian influenza this year in wild birds, and it's believed to be widespread in migratory waterfowl. Wild free-flying ducks, geese and shorebirds can carry the disease to new areas when migrating, as can raptors such as hawks and owls.

Avian influenza, commonly known as “bird flu,” is a respiratory disease of birds caused by an influenza Type A virus. These viruses can infect poultry (chickens, ducks, quail, pheasants, guinea fowl and turkeys) and some wild bird species (such as ducks, geese, swans, shorebirds, hawks and owls). However, it impacts poultry and wild birds in different ways, a DNREC press release said.

DNREC also warned the general public that the proper handling and cooking of poultry and eggs to an internal temperature of 165°F will kill bacteria and viruses, including the bird flu.

Among the recommendations DNREC offered were precautions for waterfowl hunters and those who own birds or bird feeders.

A snow goose **conservation order** is in effect through April 8. Delaware waterfowl hunters were told they can reduce the risk of exposing poultry or pet birds to AI by taking basic safety precautions to keep the disease from spreading. No one should harvest or handle wild birds that are obviously sick or found dead, the state said.

[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE](#)

# VIRTUAL SUMMIT ON DELAWARE'S CORRECTIONAL SYSTEM TO BE HELD THIS WEEK

BY CHARLIE MEGGINSON

A two-day virtual summit focused on improving Delaware's correctional system was held Tuesday and Wednesday. The event was organized by Sen. Marie Pinkney, D-New Castle, and Rep. Melissa Minor-Brown, D-New Castle South.

The “**State of State of Corrections**” summit featured national speakers, a community listening session and a series of roundtable discussions. Roundtable topics included the physical and mental wellness of incarcerated people, the reach of the juvenile justice system, the lived experiences of correctional staff, the state's expanding re-entry programs and more.

In an event announcement, Pinkney—who is also chair of the Senate Corrections and Public Safety Committee—said it's time to think of prisons as a way to rehabilitate rather than punish.

“Locking people up and throwing away the key is not justice,” Pinkney said. “It does not make our communities safer.” She argued that despite investing more than \$350

million each year in Delaware's correctional system, people return to the streets with even greater trauma than when they left.

Those incarcerated people are “disproportionally Black men—in decades-old prison facilities, where many receive inadequate medical care and few are given a chance to better their lives,” she said. “I am concerned that our refusal to confront the injustices in our own prison system is putting correctional officers at risk, failing our communities of color, and making our neighborhoods less safe.”

According to the Delaware Department of Correction's 2020 Annual Report, more than 16,000 people are still either locked in a cell or are being actively monitored by the state—a population larger than the town of Smyrna.

More than 65% of people released from Delaware prisons in 2016 were re-convicted within three years, according to the state's Statistical Analysis Center, contributing to Delaware's status as the state with the



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worst recidivism rate in the country.

Roughly 2,400 people are employed by Delaware's correctional system—a population the size of the town of Bridgeville.

“The danger to those state employees was highlighted in 2017 when about 100 inmates took control of Building C at the James T. Vaughn Correctional Center, held three staff members hostage and murdered a fourth,” Pinkney and Minor-Brown said in the event announcement, referring to the murder of correctional officer and 16-year veteran Sgt. Steven Floyd.

[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE](#)

# RECREATIONAL MARIJUANA BILL HEADS TO HOUSE FLOOR

BY CHARLIE MEGGINSON

The bill to legalize the sale and possession of marijuana in Delaware moved to the House floor Feb. 17 after earning a stamp of approval from four members of the House Appropriations Committee. The bill was “walked through” the committee, meaning the majority of the committee’s members “signed the backer,” a document that releases the bill for further consideration without the need to actually convene a meeting.

State Reps. Bill Carson, D-Smyrna, David Bentz, D-Christiana, Stephanie Bolden, D-Wilmington East, and Kimberly Williams, D-Marshallton, all signed the backer. Neither Republican on the committee—Rep. Ruth Briggs King, R-Georgetown nor Rep. Kevin Hensley, R-Odessa—signed the backer.

House Bill 350 is a reworked version of a previous attempt at marijuana legalization that would have required a  $\frac{3}{4}$  vote of both the Senate and the House. By changing some of the previous bill’s financial imperatives, the new version will only require a  $\frac{3}{5}$  majority—which Democrats alone have.

Walking the bill through the House Appropriations Committee wasn’t necessarily a political move designed to speed up approval without public input. Both Democrats

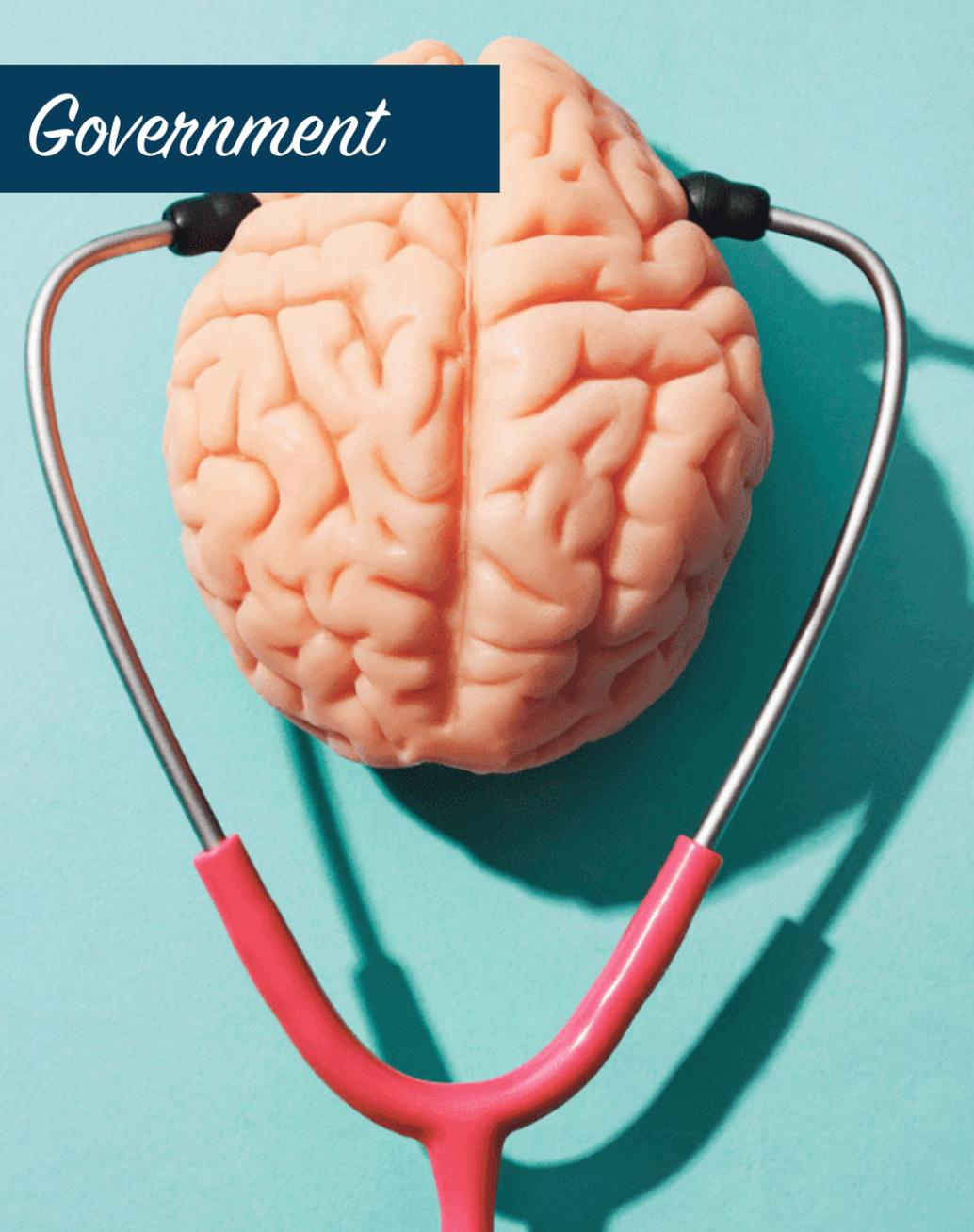
and Republicans say the move wasn’t out of the ordinary because money for the last attempt has already been included in the current budget, and that’s the only reason for it to go through the Appropriations Committee. What they don’t agree on is whether it was the best way to move forward, given the controversial nature of the bill.

The role of the Appropriations Committee is to ensure any bill that includes a fiscal note—meaning it will cost the state money—is budgeted before being passed into law. Drew Volturo, communications director for the House Democratic Caucus, explained that by rule, any bill with a fiscal note above a certain amount is automatically assigned to Appropriations after it has been released from the initial committee.”

“In this case, HB 305 had a full **public hearing** with public testimony in the House Health & Human Development Committee, which considered the bill on its merits and released it,” Volturo said.

“The funds for HB 150 (HB 305’s predecessor) already were allocated in the current operating budget,” he said. “The committee in the past has simply signed bills that are budgeted like this out of committee.”

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# THREE MENTAL HEALTH BILLS FILED IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

of a mental health crisis that began well before the pandemic and has only accelerated in the past two years.

“Anyone who has paid attention to this issue should be alarmed at the especially brutal toll this crisis has taken on our children,” she said. “Teachers across the state are seeing it every day in their classrooms. So many of their students come to school with significant unmet needs that impact their ability to learn, such as hunger, homelessness, trauma, and other untreated mental health issues.”

She pointed to a study by the National Institute of Mental Health which found that one in five youth are affected by a mental health disorder, and untreated mental illness has been shown to lead to increased risk of dropout, homelessness, substance abuse, chronic illnesses, incarceration and possibly suicide.

The study found that students with access to mental health services in school-based health centers are 10 times more likely to seek care for mental health or substance abuse than youth without access.

House Bill 300 has attracted the support of 21 co-sponsors, including 17 Democrats and four Republicans. The bill has been assigned to the House Education Committee where it is expected to receive a hearing within 12 legislative days.

House Bill 301, also sponsored by Longhurst, would establish a statewide mental health education curriculum for kindergarten through grade 12. The curriculum

would be tailored to the developmental needs of students at each grade level.

“Even before the pandemic, as many as one in 10 teens and children in this country was experiencing severe depression, while the teen suicide rate has increased by dramatically over the last decade,” said Sen. Sarah McBride, D-Wilmington North.

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BY CHARLIE MEGGINSON

Lawmakers have filed a package of bills in the General Assembly aimed at addressing Delawareans’ mental health issues.

**House Bill 300**, sponsored by House Majority Leader Valerie Longhurst, D-Delaware City, would create new positions for school counselors, social workers and school psychologists in all Delaware middle schools. Longhurst said in a press release that the state is in the midst

Connecting, supporting, and empowering young women diagnosed with breast cancer.

This program is brought to you by the Delaware Breast Cancer Coalition.



# STATE GRANTS FOR NON-PROFITS NOW REQUIRE FORMAL APPLICATION

BY CHARLIE MEGGINSON

The General Assembly’s budget-writing committee has launched a formal application process for non-profit community groups seeking capital grants through the Community Reinvestment Fund.

The lack of a formal application process last year ignited debate amongst legislators, some of whom said the process lacked transparency, **resulting in gentlemen’s agreements and pork-barrel spending.**

The **Community Reinvestment Fund** is a capital grant program that allocates funds to be used for community redevelopment, revitalization and investment capital projects designed to improve the economic, cultural, historical, and recreational health of Delaware communities. The fund was supercharged last year with one-time allocations from federal COVID relief packages.

Because those funds became available late in the legislative session, “money from the fund was spread evenly

among all 62 legislators to allocate to groups and local governments in their respective districts,” a press release from Bond Bill Committee co-chairs Sen. Nicole Poore, D-New Castle and Rep. Debra Heffernan, D-Bellefonte, said.

In many cases, community group leaders simply reached out to legislators to submit their requests, meaning those with closer relationships to lawmakers or more general political awareness may have had an edge in receiving state grants.

Once allocated, each organization receiving funding would have ordinarily had its own line item within the bond bill so that in the event a legislator objects to particular recipients of funding, they could vote accordingly. But in 2021, because of the amount of money available, the late allocation of the funds and the number of organizations that applied, the total \$70 million

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package was listed as one line-item in the Bond Bill under the assurance that the list of recipients would be made public once finalized.

Both the House and Senate passed the bill and Gov. John Carney signed it without the list.

Afterward, some legislators said it should, in the future, be included in the bond bill as a matter of transparency. That way, it could be presented to the public before a vote. “We heard the concerns loud and clear that we needed to be transparent and fair with soliciting and considering requests for these reinvestment funds, should they be available,” Heffernan said Feb. 17.

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# WILMINGTON MAN GETS 15 YEARS BEHIND BARS FOR SELLING FAKE OXYCODONE

BY CHARLIE MEGGINSON

A Wilmington man has been sentenced to more than 15 years in federal prison for making and selling fake oxycodone pills laced with fentanyl, among other charges. According to court documents, Joseph Thomas, 29, was arrested on April 30, 2020, by state and federal law enforcement.

Searches of Thomas' home, car detailing business and a storage unit he leased revealed an organized fentanyl pill-making operation, including instructions for making fake prescription pills with fentanyl, a commercial pill press, five firearms and over 1,000 rounds of ammunition.

One of the guns Thomas possessed had been reported stolen. The serial number on another gun was destroyed, making it difficult to trace.

Law enforcement also found over \$86,000 in cash inside a safe belonging to Thomas.

“Selling deadly fentanyl in pill form designed to mimic the appearance of the legitimate prescription drug oxycodone endangers lives,” said David Weiss, U.S. Attorney for the District of Delaware. “The illegal possession of firearms and ammunition endangers lives.” Weiss emphasized that his office will seek significant prison sentences for anybody who engages in similar activity and threatens the safety of communities in Delaware.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Alexander Ibrahim and Thomas' crimes were unveiled after an investigation by Homeland Security Investigations—the investigative arm of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security—and the Newport Police Department.

William Walker, special agent in charge of Homeland Security Investigations Philadelphia, said Thomas showed

PRESCHOOL - GRADE 12

“Our teachers gave great guidance but also enough room to explore and be creative.”

- Recent Wilmington Friends School Graduate

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little regard for the safety of his consumers as he willingly manufactured and sold fake prescription drugs laced with fentanyl.

“Each time highly addictive narcotics, like fentanyl, are pressed into pills, narcotics traffickers ensure repeat customers and higher profits,” Walker said. “This sentencing should serve as a reminder to those seeking to line their pockets through others' addictions. You will be arrested, you will be prosecuted, and you will be incarcerated for your criminal acts.”

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*Photo by Keina Burton for Pexels*

*Education*

TOWN SQUARE LIVE



# COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OFFERS THOUSANDS IN COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS

BY SUSAN MONDAY

As college kids decide where they're going to school, their next focus is how they're going to pay for it. The Delaware Community Foundation may be able to help.

The foundation, a non-profit that manages lots of

small funds, is a clearinghouse for hundreds of scholarships in various amounts. Last year, it awarded about \$400,000 in cash and expects to do the same this year.

Most of the scholarships are needs-based with a GPA requirement, and some are county-specific. Good news for applicants: The scholarships are not dependent on a recipient going to a Delaware school.

While there are a number of scholarships for things like engineering, business or healthcare, there are some "quirky" scholarships. They include:

- The MATRA Scholarship that requires the applicant to be a current member of the Manufacturers and Tent Renters Association.
- The Achievement Scholarship for Students with a History of Chronic Illness. It says applicants must have experienced a health-related issue lasting at

least six months that impaired the individual's ability to pursue his or her education.

- The Dr. Jill Biden Scholarship, part of the First Lady's Breast Health Initiative. It is open to applicants pursuing a career in healthcare or education.
- The Ken Cicerale Memorial Music Scholarship. It's aimed at applicants pursuing a major in music at an accredited four-year institution.

The deadline to apply is March 15. Find the complete list [HERE](#).

Foundation CEO Stuart Comstock-Gay says the donor determines the individual scholarship amount and any special criteria. Last year, the amounts ranged from \$500 to \$26,000. The foundation uses social media and high school counselors to advertise the scholarship program. Once a student applies, volunteers in each of Delaware's three counties review the applications and select an appropriate recipient.

Comstock-Gay says the donors, some of whom are anonymous, just want to be generous. Many credit college for their success in life, or are organizations who want to encourage students to continue their education.

He says he's proud that the foundation "has the honor of shepherding the money to those who need it."



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*Photo by Nick Halliday*



*Sports*

**TOWN SQUARE LIVE**



# HOWARD'S PRESSURE TOO MUCH FOR NO. 1 SALESIANUM

utes of the game was no different as they pressed and trapped Sallies' ball handlers just across the half court line. The Wildcats also came to play on the offensive end, scoring 17 points in the quarter including three for five from deep. Despite all this Sallies ended the quarter with an 18-17 lead getting contributions from their two top players—Justin Molen and Isaiah Hinson.

Howard's tough defense became more of an issue for Sallies' ball handlers in the beginning of the second quarter. The home team found it difficult to get into any sort of rhythm offensively as most of its scoring opportunities came off of broken plays and cross court passes. The Wildcats, on the other hand, executed its half court sets and passed the ball around well but unlike the first quarter settled for deep three-point shots that they were unable to knock down. Isiah Hinson for Sallies was the only player on the court who found consistent offense and added eight points in the quarter to lead all scorers with 13 and guided Sallies to a 33-31 lead going into the locker room at half time.

[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE](#)

BY JOE SINGLES

The No. 4 Howard Wildcats visited No. 1 Salesianum High School Feb. 19 for a highly-anticipated boys' basketball matchup that many experts believe could be a preview of the state finals in mid-March. Both teams came out ready to play in the first quarter with a ton of energy on the defensive end. Howard this season has thrived on its defensive intensity and the first eight min-

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# DELAWARE **LIVE** SPORTS

## TOP 10 RANKINGS

BY JASON WINCHELL

# WILMINGTON TO HOST A-10 WOMEN'S BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

BY CHARLIE MEGGINSON

Wilmington will host the Atlantic 10 Conference women's basketball championship at the Chase Fieldhouse between March 2 and March 6. The 2022 championship will mark the first time in six years during which all 14 Atlantic 10 Conference teams will compete under one roof.

"This is also an important year for women's collegiate sports, as 2022 marks the 50th anniversary of Title IX," event organizers said in a press release Thursday.

Because Delaware does not have a team in the Atlantic 10 Conference, the Chase Fieldhouse represents a neutral site. The 2022 championship will be only the eighth time in the conference's 40-year history that the event is held at such a location. For the last three seasons, it has been held at member institutions' campuses.

Atlantic 10 women's basketball teams are based in eight states and Washington, D.C. They include Davidson College, the University of Dayton, Duquesne University, Fordham University, George Mason University, The George Washington University, La Salle University, the University of Massachusetts, the University of Rhode Island, University of Richmond, St. Bonaventure University, Saint Joseph's University, Saint Louis University and Virginia Commonwealth University.

Four of the student-athletes participating in this year's championship come from Wilmington, including Michelle Kozicki from La Salle University, Ber'nyah Mayo and Stefanie Kulesza from the University of Massachusetts, and Yanni Hendley from the University

of Rhode Island.

"We're ready to roll out the red carpet for everyone associated with the Atlantic 10 championship," said Wilmington Mayor Mike Purzycki in the press release. "The entire community has come together to ensure that these student-athletes, their coaches, their parents and all the other fans feel right at home here."

As of now, all fans and game staff are required to wear a mask while inside Chase Fieldhouse, except while actively eating or drinking.

Last October, the Atlantic 10 Conference signed a three-year agreement with BPG|SPORTS, the company that operates Chase Fieldhouse, making this the highest-profile basketball championship to come to the city in recent memory. According to event organizers, it's anticipated that this year's event will bring 1,500 hotel room nights to New Castle County.

"We are unbelievably honored to be selected to host the Atlantic 10 Women's Championship," said BPG|SPORTS president Rob Buccini.

"This opportunity allows us to not only host the highest level of collegiate basketball but also gives us the ability to showcase the city to the students and fans," he continued. "We understand the prestige the number of institutions brings to this tournament, and we are excited to host each one."

The Atlantic 10 Conference's Women's Basketball Championship will tip off with all 14 schools competing in a first round on Wednesday, March 2, followed by four second-round games on Thursday, March 3. Four quarter final games will take place on Friday, March 4.

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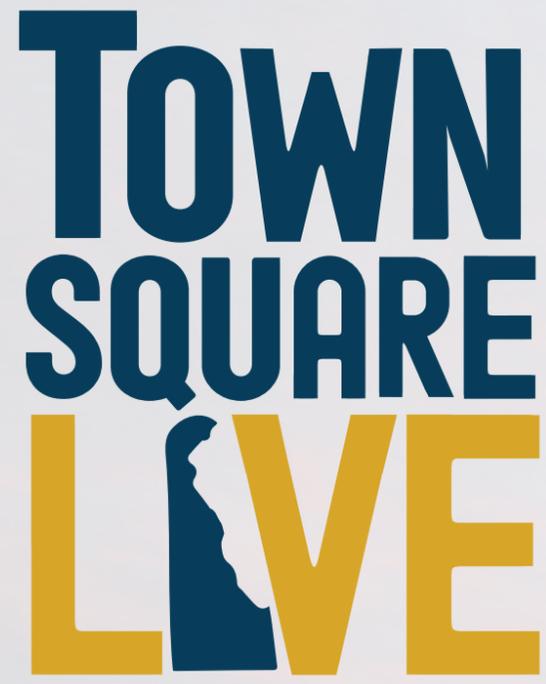


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