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*April 7, 2022  
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**DELAWARE THEATRE SEASON**



**BILL AIMS TO REDUCE BURDENS**



**PADUA STUDENTS GET STEM EXPERIENCE**

**TOWN SQUARE LIVE**

*Photo credit: Longwood Gardens*



*Community*

**TOWN SQUARE LIVE**



# DELAWARE THEATRE SEASON TO INCLUDE TWO WORLD PREMIERE MUSICALS

**BY BETSY PRICE**

The Delaware Theatre Company’s 2022-23 season will include two world premiere musicals, including one about Dolly Parton. The rest of the five-show season will be filled with an off-Broadway musical, a play about the Tuskegee Airmen and a comedy classic, “One Man, Two Guvners.”

“Our new season is vibrant and wide-ranging,” said Bud Martin, DTC’s executive and artistic director, in a press release. “Once again, we’re working with some of the top talent in the theater world. There’s no doubt our patrons will find our offerings captivating and enriching.”

“Wide-ranging” is the key descriptor there. The season opens Sept. 14 with “Here You Come Again: How Dolly Parton Saved My Life in 12 Easy Songs.” It’s a new work by Bruce Vilanch, Gabriel Barre and Tricia Paoluccio. The songs will include some written by Parton.

Vilanch and Barre are no strangers to DTC’s Riverfront theater. Vilanch wrote the book for “Sign of the Times,” a musical based on the music of Petula Clark, and

Barre directed the show when it played there in November and December 2018.

“Here You Come Again” will follow the tale of a has-been-who-never-was comedian and his unusual relationship with his longtime idol, Dolly Parton. The show will celebrate how Parton’s music has both profound and funny things to say about life, love and how to pull yourself up by your bootstraps—even if your bootstraps don’t have rhinestones. The Parton show closes Oct. 2, with “Black Angels over Tuskegee: The Story of the Tuskegee Airmen” set to run Oct. 12-30.

The changeover will be made easier because the Tuskegee show’s run is a stop on its tour. It’s the first time the Delaware Theatre has booked a show this size as part of its regular programming.

Inspired by true events, the drama tells the story of six trail-blazing men who excelled to become the first Black aviators in the United States Army Air Forces. The play explores their struggles with Jim Crow, insults to their intelligence, patriotism, brotherhood and dreams of an inclusive and fair society.

Matt Silva, the theater’s chief operating officer and managing producer, said the theater was thrilled to be able to book the show. “Shows of this nature typically play for a performance or two and move from city to city,” he said. “We are eager for them to be with us for three weeks so that we can share this story with our community.” The show will offer a 50-minute student version.

DTC decided to book the show partly because of the important historical story it tells, but also to stretch the budget coming out of the pandemic. The set will be ready to go and the actors won’t need three weeks of rehearsal on the theater’s stages.

“In order to give voice to important stories while continuing to bring top-notch entertainment to Wilmington, we have had to get creative with how we program shows,” Silva said.

[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE](#)



# GEORGE WILL LEADS MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR PETE DU PONT

BY BETSY PRICE

A memorial service for former Delaware Gov. Pete du Pont will be held April 29, with the eulogy delivered by columnist and author George Will.

du Pont died last May after a long illness.

The memorial, styled as a celebration of du Pont’s life and legacy, will be held at 2 p.m. in The Playhouse on Rodney Square. A reception afterward will take place in the Gold Ballroom of the Hotel du Pont from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. The event is open to the public, but reservations for a place in the 1,200-seat theater are required before April 22. Register [HERE](#).

The memorial also will be livestreamed through the Pete du Pont Freedom Foundation. Those attending virtually should visit the website at least a few minutes before 2 p.m. on April 29 to watch.

Other speakers will include Gov. John Carney, the Rev. Ruth Beresford and members of du Pont’s family.

“It is hard to say goodbye to a remarkable man,” said Glenn Kenton, du Pont’s former secretary of state, in a press release. “He served his state and his country in countless ways. He left Delaware a better place than he found it. He fostered expansive growth and changed laws and systems that created a legacy in this state that

continues to this day.”

du Pont was a lifelong Republican who served as a state legislator, member of Congress, presidential candidate, commentator and columnist. He served as governor from 1977 to 1985.

He advocated for less government regulation and policies that expanded the economy and believed decisions should be made at businesses or homes, not by government. During his term in office, JP Morgan Chase, Citicorp and MBNA were among the banks that came to Delaware, bringing thousands of financial service jobs. In turn, their contributions strengthened the real estate market, as well as community and non-profit organizations.

His 1988 Republican presidential nomination employed a “Damn Right” motto that colored political debate for the next two decades. After he left politics, he was a commentator on television, radio and in print media, pushing for the same issues he championed in office.

Will is a libertarian-conservative political commentator and author. He writes for *The Washington Post* and appears on NBC News and MSNBC. He won the Pulitzer Prize for Commentary in 1977.




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# NEW, RETIRED CATHOLIC BISHOPS WILL CELEBRATE HOLY WEEK MASSES

BY BETSY PRICE

The Diocese of Wilmington has announced where Bishop William E. Koenig will celebrate services and participate in other events during Holy Week and Easter.

All masses and services are open to the public. Events at the Cathedral of Saint Peter will be livestreamed on the Diocese of Wilmington's YouTube [channel](#).

Retired bishop, the Most Reverend W. Francis Malooly, also will be celebrating Holy Week and Easter events. He stepped aside last year.

Koenig will spend all day Saturday, April 9, with the diocese's annual youth pilgrimage. He will walk with hundreds of youth and adult volunteers from all over Delaware and Maryland's Eastern Shore as they carry a wooden cross through the streets of Wilmington.

This year's theme is "We Walk by Faith." The event features a concert, prayer, a visit to Saint Francis Hospital, the Sacrament of Reconciliation (confession),

Stations of the Cross and Eucharistic Adoration, during stops at five Wilmington Catholic churches. The bishop will conclude the pilgrimage by celebrating the 5 p.m. Palm Sunday Vigil mass at St. Elizabeth Church, Cedar and Clayton Streets in Wilmington.

On Sunday, April 10, Koenig will celebrate the Palm Sunday mass at the historic Cathedral of Saint Peter, Sixth and West Streets in Wilmington, beginning at 9:30 a.m. Koenig, along with priests throughout the diocese, will hear confessions during Reconciliation Monday. Catholic residents of Delaware and Maryland's Eastern Shore, are invited to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation at any of the 56 parish churches in the diocese, from 3 p.m. until 8 p.m.

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*Business*

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# LAWSUIT FILED TO STOP CONSTRUCTION OF SMYRNA SOLAR FARM

BY CHARLIE MEGGINSON

A Smyrna landowner has filed a lawsuit to stop the construction of a 200-acre solar farm behind Boondocks Restaurant and Store near Woodland Beach.

Donald Goldsborough owns a 342-acre property across the street from Boondocks, in between Lighthouse Road and Woodland Beach Road. He and a newly-formed group called **Citizens Against Solar Pollution** have filed **suit** against Kent County and its Levy Court, alleging that the proposed 100-megawatt solar farm would damage the environment, reduce property values, defile the area's rural character and threaten historical artifacts believed to be on the property.

Developers say they've gone above and beyond to comply with county regulations and ensure the solar power generation facility doesn't distract from the area's natural beauty.

Among other things, the company behind the **facility**—Freepoint Solar—has committed to planting more than 4,000 trees to obscure the solar farm from public view. The firm has also pledged to retire the facility

after the 25-year lifespan of the solar panels and restore it to agricultural use.

Proponents testified during Levy Court meetings that the solar farm would have no negative impact on the environment. On the contrary, its development is one of many steps Delaware—the lowest-lying state in the nation—should be taking in the fight against climate change, they said.

Attempts to reach Freepoint Solar for comment were not immediately successful.

“If you're in a downtown historic district, you can't build a high-rise there because it's out of character with the surroundings,” Goldsborough told Delaware LIVE News. “Well, this solar farm is definitely way out of character with its surroundings.”

He said that if the facility were producing power by any other means than solar, it would have been required to adhere to strict regulatory approval requirements.

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# BILL AIMS TO REDUCE REGULATORY BURDEN ON SMALL BUSINESSES

BY CHARLIE MEGGINSON

A proposed bill in the House of Representatives would require state agencies to consider the burden new regulations would impose on businesses and take steps to minimize those impacts.

Under the Regulatory Flexibility Act, before adopting a new regulation, state agencies would be required to complete an economic impact statement. The statement would identify affected businesses, determine the cost of compliance on those companies and consider less intrusive or expensive alternatives to new regulations.

“Regulations carry the weight of law and may require businesses to make large investments in time and other resources to achieve compliance,” said the bill’s sponsor, Rep. Charles Postles, R-Milford North.

Postles explained that while regulations play a vital role in protecting public health, worker safety and the environment, Delaware’s regulatory process is often weighted in favor of the state agencies making the rules.

“It is easy for state officials to become so preoccupied with carrying out their agency’s mission that other valid considerations are not given proper attention, resulting in rules that needlessly hamper the viability of job-creating enterprises.”

Current law requires state regulations to be periodically reviewed, but Postles’ bill would take that a step further by mandating that the review process emphasize minimizing the economic impact on small businesses. Agencies would be required to consider the continued need for the regulation and offer the public opportunity to provide comment in the regulatory review process.

The review would also be required to consider the extent to which the regulation overlaps, duplicates, or conflicts with other federal, state, or local regulations; and the degree to which technology, economic conditions or other factors that have changed since the

regulation was put into place.

Postles said he was encouraged to sponsor the legislation by small business owners and prospective entrepreneurs who complain it’s becoming increasingly difficult to comply with overbearing regulations.

“Regulations, while very valuable, also come at a cost,” he said. “I’m just asking that they would look at the regulations that they’re imposing, and do it in the least intrusive and the least costly method.”

Postles noted a recent analysis from *U.S. News & World Report* which ranked Delaware among the 10 worst states to start a business. A 2019 ranking from *Forbes* of the best states to do business gave Delaware an overall standing of 23rd, but the state placed 42nd in the sub-category of “regulatory environment.”

Bob Older, president of the Delaware Small Business Chamber, said while he agrees Delaware is becoming less friendly to small businesses, Postles’ proposal fails to enact the kind of meaningful change that’s needed.

“They need to crawl before they can run and they’re trying to sprint right now,” Older said. “I think there’s a lot of things that need to be fixed with what we currently have before something like this can be introduced and be potentially beneficial towards small businesses.”

While he’s in favor of reducing the regulatory burden on small businesses, Older said the law falls short because the state considers any company with less than 500 employees to be a small business.

[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE](#)

# FMC, SEARS HONORED AT ANNUAL STATE CHAMBER DINNER

BY BETSY PRICE

FMC Corp. scientists test 60,000 new compounds a year in their search for better ways to help crops beat disease and pests to produce more per acre.

That breaks down to seven compounds tested per hour for every hour in a year, said Dr. Kathleen Shelton, executive vice president and chief technology officer at FMC, which was honored Monday night during the 185th annual Delaware State Chamber of Commerce.

Even as a new molecule is discovered, so much research and testing is required that any product containing it won't hit the market until 2032, she said.

Shelton told the sold-out crowd of 1,000 at the Chase Center at the Riverfront how the company started with 2,000 former DuPont employees after the legacy company merged with Dow. Of those employees, 500 were scientists in research and development. Many work in Delaware, where FMC has research facilities, farms, greenhouses and more.

In Delaware, Shelton pointed out, nearly 40% of the land is designated agriculture. The state has 2,300 farms that produce \$1.5 billion in sales, including corn, soybeans, watermelons, lima beans and cucumbers.

A team of biologists, chemists, entomologists and molecular biologists work in collaboration to create new fertilizers and pesticides such as FMC's new Xyway, which protects corn from a blight called gray leaf spot. A wine glass full of it will protect an entire crop, Shelton pointed out.

Her keynote speech highlighted a joyous night in which the chamber and guests gathered for the first time since early 2020. Last year's event was online. This year's was moved from earlier in the year to Monday because of the rise of COVID-19 cases around the holidays.

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**TOWN SQUARE LIVE**



# TO-GO ALCOHOL LAW TOOK EFFECT APRIL 1

When that order expired, the legislature unanimously passed a bill to allow the practice to continue, although the act included a sunset clause that required it to be re-evaluated after a year. House Bill 290 removed that sunset clause, permanently cementing the legality of the practice in Delaware.

Under the law, to-go alcoholic beverages must be sold in a container designed to prevent consumption while driving, such as an impermeable lid, cap or seal.

Restaurants must also sell a minimum of \$10 worth of food as part of the take-out, curbside or drive-through sale of alcoholic beverages. Sales are limited to one 750 mL bottle of wine, six servings of beer, or one mixed cocktail made in the establishment. The second limits the type and amount of to-go alcoholic beverages allowed to be sold to one 750 mL bottle of wine, six servings of beer and individual mixed cocktails.

In a Facebook post, the Delaware Restaurant Association celebrated the new law. “Cheers and thank you Speaker Pete Schwartzkopf for getting this important legislation passed for Delaware restaurants, industry supporters, and citizens that enjoy the convenience of carryout orders (including alcoholic beverages) from their favorite neighborhood restaurants!”



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

**- URSULINE ACADEMY**

## BY CHARLIE MEGGINSON

Restaurants, brewpubs, taverns and taprooms in Delaware were permanently able to serve to-go alcoholic beverages April 1.

House Bill 290, which passed in January, allows food and drink establishments to sell alcoholic beverages in transactions for take-out, curbside or drive-through service and to use outdoor seating for serving food and drinks.

To-go drinks and outdoor seating were initially allowed during the pandemic under an executive order issued by Gov. John Carney. The order was designed to provide additional revenue streams for restaurants after they were largely shuttered by COVID-19 lockdowns.

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# WILMINGTON BREW WORKS LUAU PUNCH DECLARED 'BEST BEER IN DELAWARE'



BY CHARLIE MEGGINSON

It's fruity, it's sour, it's the beer of the hour. [Wilmington Brew Works'](#) milkshake sour—Luau Punch—won the fan-favorite/best overall beer recognition at the 302 Beer Drinkers Choice Awards. The brewery describes Luau Punch like this: “Surf’s Up! Travel to the Hawaiian Islands, or just back to your childhood, with this nostalgic flavor. The only thing that’s missing is heaps of Red Dye #5! Fermented with Tropical Fruits amongst the ambiance of our own Brewhouse Luau.”

This is the second time Luau Punch has been declared Delaware’s Best Beer at the Choice Awards, which is hosted by [Crooked Hammock Brewery](#).

Every brewery in the state was invited to compete in the event, which organizers said is known for its “sudsy silliness and refined debauchery.” Guests were able to vote online and democratically pick winners; of the people, by the people, for the people in the never-ending quest to crown “Delaware’s Best Beer.”

Winners include:

- Best Judge Costume: She Doesn’t Even Drink Beer (Inspired by Mean Girls)
- Best Brewery Costume: Mispillion River/Ghostbusters
- Best Brewery Booth: First State Brewing/Mad Scientists
- Most Unique Beer: Ranch Water – Autumn Arch Beer Project (a blonde ale inspired by a popular tequila, lime, and soda concoction)
- Fan Favorite/Best Overall: Wilmington Brew Works- Luau Punch (successfully defended its title after winning at the last Beer Drinkers Choice Awards event)



*Photo from Getty Images*



*Government*

**TOWN SQUARE LIVE**



# PAID LEAVE BILL TO BE WALKED THROUGH HOUSE COMMITTEE

BY CHARLIE MEGGINSON

The bill to create a statewide paid family and medical leave program faced a slight hiccup on its journey to becoming law Wednesday.

The **Healthy Delaware Families Act** was the only bill to be considered by the 15-member House Health & Human Development Committee after passing along party lines in the Senate last month.

Proponents continued to argue during the two-hour hearing that the bill is necessary for those workers whose jobs don't or can't pay wages during and after pregnancies, illnesses and major life events.

Opponents fear that the cost will be too great for small businesses to absorb, especially given the challenges presented by the global pandemic.

The two-hour-long committee hearing concluded with a vote that revealed seven representatives in favor, five against and three absent. It needed eight votes in

order to be released from the committee through normal channels.

The shortfall came because three members of the committee weren't present. Rep. Nnamdi Chukwuocha, D-Wilmington, was attending a funeral. Rep. Sean Lynn, D-Dover, was sick. Rep. Rich Collins, R-Millsboro, was absent. Chukwuocha and Lynn are both co-sponsors of the bill and would have voted in favor had they been in attendance.

"I am not going to let this bill languish in this committee when we have enough members to support its release who are not here because of unfortunate circumstances," said Rep. David Bentz, D-Christiana, who chairs the Health & Human Development Committee.

In order to move the legislation along, Bentz said he would "walk the bill."

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## Government

# JUDGE TO CONSIDER MOTION TO DISMISS MCGUINNESS CASE

BY CHARLIE MEGGINSON

Delaware State Auditor Kathleen McGuinness will face a judge for the first time Thursday after being indicted on multiple corruption charges last October.

While the trial won't begin until May 16, Thursday's hearing will address

pretrial motions, including one from McGuinness's defense team to dismiss the charges against her.

McGuinness faces felony and misdemeanor charges alleging conflict of interest, theft, non-compliance with procurement law, official misconduct and witness intimidation.

She's accused of arranging public payments to a campaign consultant to avoid regulator scrutiny, firing workers in her office to hire her daughter, who she allowed to use a state car then kept paying while the daughter was in college and not working, and attempting to intimidate employees who might help investigators looking into her conduct.

Last week, prosecutors updated the felony intimidation charge after learning McGuinness allegedly encouraged employees to yell out loud "confidentiality" as the

office's motto.

"On or about February 11, 2022, DEFENDANT called an all-staff meeting," the updated indictment reads. "DEFENDANT was displeased that, in her belief, information was leaking from the OAOA. She told them that she used to have the staff yell out loud, 'Confidentiality!' and that 'confidentiality' means 'what happens in this office, stays in this office.' Near the end of the meeting, DEFENDANT warned, 'We are gonna have a zero tolerance for negativity.'"

Oral arguments on the pending motions will be heard by Judge William C. Carpenter Jr. of the Superior Court of Delaware on Thursday, April 7. Carpenter could rule on the motions after attorneys make their arguments, or after Thursday's proceedings conclude. Click [HERE](#) to read the updated indictment.



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# BILL BANNING USE OF GENDER FOR CAR INSURANCE RATES PASSES SENATE

BY CHARLIE MEGGINSON

A lengthy and heated debate on the Senate floor Tuesday preceded the passage of a bill that would make it illegal for car insurers in Delaware to use gender as a factor when determining customers' premiums.

**Senate Bill 231**, sponsored by Sen. Kyle Evans Gay, D-Talleyville, came at the recommendation of State Insurance Commissioner Trinidad Navarro, who said in a press release following the bill's passage that it will result in a "more equitable society."

The bill was based on a disputed **report** released in March by Navarro that suggests some women in Delaware pay higher automobile insurance premiums than men, even when all other factors are the same.

Despite changing the law relating to automobile insurance, the bill did not go through the Senate Insurance Committee. Instead, it was heard by and released from the Senate Transportation Committee, to the bewilderment of some lawmakers.

"This is an insurance bill. It didn't go through the Insurance Committee," said Sen. Colin Bonini, R-Dover. "Red flag."

Numerous insurance industry officials testified during Tuesday's Senate hearing, with nearly all of them warning that if made law, Senate Bill 231 will result in increased insurance premiums for Delaware women.

Navarro's report is flawed, they said, in that it relies on quotes—not actual premiums—given to a hypothetical consumer who is a 35-year-old woman. The report did not include quotes for consumers of different ages or who have different rating factors.

"My members' experience show genders to be strong predictors of loss with the relative risks between genders varying by age," said Nancy Egan, director of government relations at American Property Casualty Insurance Association.

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## 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.**

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# ELECTIONS CANCELLED AFTER SEATS GO UNOPPOSED

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# ELECTION CENTER

BY CHARLIE MEGGINSON

If you harbored any fears that the elections of 2022 would be a raging repeat, on a local level, of the chaos of 2020, you'd be wrong. So far, 21 of Delaware's 57 cities and towns have canceled elections because each candidate was unopposed. That includes Newark. When candidates run unopposed, so long as they meet all of the qualifications, they automatically assume office and the election is no longer necessary.

Nine of Delaware's municipalities already held their 2022 elections, and eight do not have elections in 2022. Not all city and municipal elections are on the same day, but many are in April and May.

There are 11 towns that are still accepting candidates, and most require candidates to file this month.

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Government

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# STATE REP. CALLS \$300 RELIEF CHECK A BRIBE

BY CHARLIE MEGGINSON

The bipartisan proposal to give every adult Delawarean \$300 in direct relief was formalized Friday after lawmakers filed the bill, which they dubbed the 2022 Delaware Relief Rebate Program.

**House Bill 360** will result in the issuance of a one-time payment to every Delaware resident taxpayer who filed personal income tax returns for tax year 2020, and adult residents who did not file a 2020 tax return, including those who are on Social Security and disability.

Sponsors say the bill is designed to help offset residents' recent hardships and ease the financial burden many are facing in light of record inflation and rising gas prices. Payments to the 600,000-plus tax filers could be distributed as soon as six weeks after the bill is signed into law.

Not everyone is thrilled about the rebate. Rep. Mike Ramone, R-Pike Creek South, told Delaware LIVE News

that with back-to-back budget surpluses approaching \$1 billion, lawmakers should be considering permanent tax relief rather than one-time "bribes" during an election year.

"To give a one-time check back is, in my opinion, very disingenuous," Ramone said. "They want to give out this little \$300 check to people to try to throw them a bone—and for what? So that they get their votes in this election year, and I think that's horrible."

Ramone said that when Delaware's financial outlook was less rosy, lawmakers increased the realty transfer tax and cut the senior property tax credit while promising to restore both once the budget rebounded. Now that they haven't done that, they're cutting one-time checks and hoping you'll forget, he said.

If the \$300 relief proposal is passed, Delawareans who filed 2020 income taxes would receive payments auto-

matically and would not need to take any action to receive the money.

The bill would instruct the Department of Finance to establish a process to provide the relief rebate to resident adults who did not file a 2020 state income tax return—such as seniors and lower-income residents—by identifying adult residents through existing databases held by other state agencies, such as the Division of Motor Vehicles. Those residents would receive their rebates as they are identified.

The Department of Finance would then work with the Department of Technology and Information to implement a process by which eligible residents who have not been identified by other means could apply for and receive the relief rebate, subject to verification of their identity and eligibility.

The proposal's \$180 million price tag is well within what the state can afford, given a budget surplus just south of \$1 billion. Another \$50 million would be appropriated from fiscal year 2023 funds to cover the estimated 150,000 residents who did not file 2020 taxes but are still eligible for the relief rebate.

Last year, Ramone introduced House Bill 71, aimed at decreasing the realty transfer tax from 4% to 3%, where it sat before lawmakers increased it in 2017.

If implemented in fiscal year 2024, House Bill 71 would save homebuyers and sellers \$83 million—\$100 million less than the \$300 direct relief proposal will cost the state.

[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE](#)

# HOUSE TO HOLD COMMITTEE HEARINGS IN HYBRID FORMAT INDEFINITELY

BY CHARLIE MEGGINSON

The Delaware House of Representatives will conduct committee hearings in hybrid format indefinitely, Democratic leaders announced March 31. The hybrid format allows members of the public to attend hearings and offer comments in-person or from the comfort of their homes.

During the pandemic, the General Assembly conducted the majority of its committee meetings and floor sessions virtually. The House and Senate have resumed in-person floor sessions, which are open to the public and livestreamed on the legislative [website](#).

Committee meetings, which were conducted via Zoom between January 2021 and March 2022, saw record participation as a result of the virtual format.

When the House of Representatives resumed in-person committee meetings at Legislative Hall, legislative leaders decided to continue offering residents a remote participation option.

“COVID reshaped many of our lives, but it also made us think outside the box about how we conduct business,” said House Speaker Pete Schwartzkopf, D-Rehoboth Beach. “One positive change was the increased transparency that has come from streaming our meetings and sessions online. Even as the House has resumed full in-person committee meetings, we have recognized the value of the virtual aspect and have decided to continue this practice.”

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*Education*

**TOWN SQUARE LIVE**





# PADUA STUDENTS GET HANDS-ON STEM EXPERIENCE AT UD, CHEMOURS LABS

The company's 312,000-square-foot hub on the Star Campus features more than 130 labs specializing in fluoroproducts, chemical solutions and titanium technologies. The facility is home to 330 of the company's researchers and scientists, consolidating most of the company's U.S. innovation efforts.

Through Discover Learning, freshmen and sophomores at Padua are assigned to create toy prototypes, which junior and seniors are assigned a task. The toys include simple machines. The students design and build them and then are asked to present their results to industry representatives, professors, judges and alumni. Presentations are given in December, with reps from the toy company Melissa & Doug in attendance.

"The students get really excited about the class, especially on the build days," Szurkowski said. "There's so many advanced tools in UD's labs, and they're like kids in a candy store."

Maggie Morris, a student in the class, said that working at a college lab helps students who want real-world engineering experience. "My favorite part of the class is the build day at UD," she said, "We were able to use tools that we do not have in the classroom and receive help from professional engineers."

Szurkowski had been teaching a similar year-long engineering class using a Boston Museum of Science curriculum. What she really wanted, though, was a semester-long class so more students could participate. With the help of Buckley, the Discover Learning class was created. Since then, Szurkowski said enrollment in engineering classes has gone up and after taking the hands-on class, many of her students register for additional classes in the field.

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## BY JAREK RUTZ

The engineering students of Padua Academy are making their ideas come to life through the engineering facilities and a 3D design lab at the University of Delaware.

Two years ago, the all-girls school in Wilmington partnered with Chemours Discovery Hub at the University of Delaware STAR Campus in an effort to connect Padua's students with industry experts. The young women are part of a Padua class called Discover Learning. It was created by Cheryl Szurkowski and Dr. Jenny Buckley, a UD associate professor in mechanical engineering, in 2020 to give the Padua students a better understanding of what engineering processes entail by providing real-life construction of products.

Chemours is a chemistry company based in Wilmington that spun off from the Dupont Co. It has said it plans to invest \$50 million in STEM education and to fill 50% of all its STEM positions globally with women.

# SCIENCE OF READING BILL HEADS TO SENATE FLOOR WITH BIPARTISAN SUPPORT



**BY JAREK RUTZ**

Delaware has a literacy problem, and Sen. Laura Sturgeon is trying to fix it by having schools teach using the science of reading. Her Senate Substitute 1 for Senate Bill 4, which requires Delaware schools to use materials and techniques resulting from the study of the brain and how it learns to read, was released Wednesday by the Senate Education Committee without any no votes.

Sen. Colin Bonini, R-Dover, said he's really excited about what the bill will do. "Reading is at the very core of all learning," said Bonini, who added that his wife

has a PhD in neurobiology from Stanford. "She's very, very supportive and I think we should be excited about it."

The bill now heads to the House floor.

The science of reading focuses on six essential components of early reading instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, reading fluency, vocabulary, text comprehension and oral language.

During Wednesday's 45-minute discussion of the bill, the majority of time was devoted to people explaining how the legislation will translate to schools.

Sturgeon said that since 2002, Delaware's reading scores have dropped from sixth in the nation to 37th. Only 51% of third graders score at or above grade level in English language arts on Delaware's state assessment, with gaps in achievement among racial and socioeconomic subgroups.

SB 4 requires schools districts and charters serving students between kindergarten and third grade to adopt a reading instruction curriculum from the Department of Education, demonstrate that reading teachers understand the principles and identify a supervisor to oversee and assist with the curriculum.

The state would be responsible for maintaining and publishing a list of evidence-based reading instruction curricula for grades kindergarten through three that align to the science of reading.

SB 4 builds on SB 133, a bipartisan bill passed last June that required all teacher preparation programs in the state to use evidence-based instructional strategies rooted in the science of reading.

In the hearing, Sturgeon said that our brains are not naturally wired to understand a written language.

"Open up a document written in Arabic or a language that uses the Cyrillic alphabet and ask yourself if you would be able to read that fluidly just by being read to and shown pictures of what the words mean, without ever being taught explicitly," she said.

Students need to be given phonics instruction, learning the sounds that go with each letter, she said.

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# COLLEGES ASK FOR MILLIONS IN STATE CONSTRUCTION MONEY

BY JAREK RUTZ

Three Delaware colleges and universities have asked the state for \$120 million to fund construction of new buildings as well as deferred upkeep on older ones.

In testimony last week, the presidents of the University of Delaware, Delaware State University and Delaware Technical Community College asked the Joint Committee on Capital Improvement for money to take care of their campuses.

The committee creates the state Bond Bill, which includes money for new projects on a state and local level. The committee will discuss requests from many agencies to create the Bond Bill and then present it to the General Assembly in early June. Here's what the schools asked for.

## University of Delaware

President Dennis Assanis requested \$76.5 million in appropriations for three major projects at the university, including \$20 million for deferred maintenance.

The project that will get the largest piece of that pie—\$50 million—is the \$165 million Building X project, which will house labs and engineering facilities. Building X will replace the McKinley Lab, which is already being torn down. It will be an interdisciplinary facility organized around themes—human disease, neuroscience and human behavior—rather than departments to encourage people to collaborate, Assanis said.

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## HUNDREDS OF CHRISTINA STUDENTS RECEIVE TUTORING FOR LEARNING LOSS

BY JAREK RUTZ

Over 600 students in Christina School District are taking part in a district-wide one-on-one virtual tutoring program to help them climb the ladder of proficiency in math and reading.

The results: About 60% of those who started last summer have moved from below grade level to at least early grade level in both language arts and math.

The program, which doesn't have a name, pays for four tutorial companies to provide the service. The district is using federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief funds, some of which are designated to help schools recover from pandemic learning loss. Joining the tutoring program was voluntary.

"The 600 students exceeds my expectations for the program," said Gina Moody, director of student services and whole child support at Christina School District. "The high number of students involved in just the first

year shows how popular and much-needed it is among Delaware's youth."

The program was up against not only pandemic learning loss, but also lingering statistics that **show** fewer than 50% of Delaware's students read at grade level. Students struggling with reading are **more likely to drop out** of school and get in trouble with the law.

The tutoring program divides participants into three categories: Students in the red zone are below grade level. Those in the yellow zone are at early grade level. Students in the green zone are at or above grade level.

Students could opt to start their lessons over the summer or they could begin at the start of the school year, with lessons taking place throughout the current school year. Both groups of students showed significant improvement in their math and English language arts learning.

For those that began lessons last summer, 52% of the students were in the red zone for English and language arts in the fall. By the end of winter, just 39% of the students were in the red, meaning 61% of the students were either early grade level, at grade level, or beyond.

Fifty-five percent of students who began math lessons last summer entered their fall semester in the red zone. At winter's conclusion, only 36% were in the red zone. 64% were at least at early grade level learning.

Students that started lessons at the beginning of the school year experienced similar results. Sixty-one percent of these students entered the school year at a sub grade level mark for English language arts. Only 47% of those students were still in the red zone after winter. Fifty three percent of students were at least at early grade level.

At the beginning of the year, 69% of this group of students entered the fall below grade level for math. At winter's end, this number dipped to 43%, with 57% of students reaching proficiency.

Parents are pleased. Peije Rollins has two children, Dominique and Draya, who are enrolled in the district's tutoring services. She's noticed a tremendous difference in both of her children.

"Draya wasn't really comprehending words that well this year and two weeks of being tutored, she started coming home with As on her spelling tests," said Rollins. She said Dominique and Draya look forward to their weekly sessions and love working one-on-one with their tutor.

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*Photo by Nick Halliday*



*Sports*

**TOWN SQUARE LIVE**

# ARCHMERE'S OFFENSE COMES ALIVE AT BIG OAK PARK



BY GLENN FRAZER

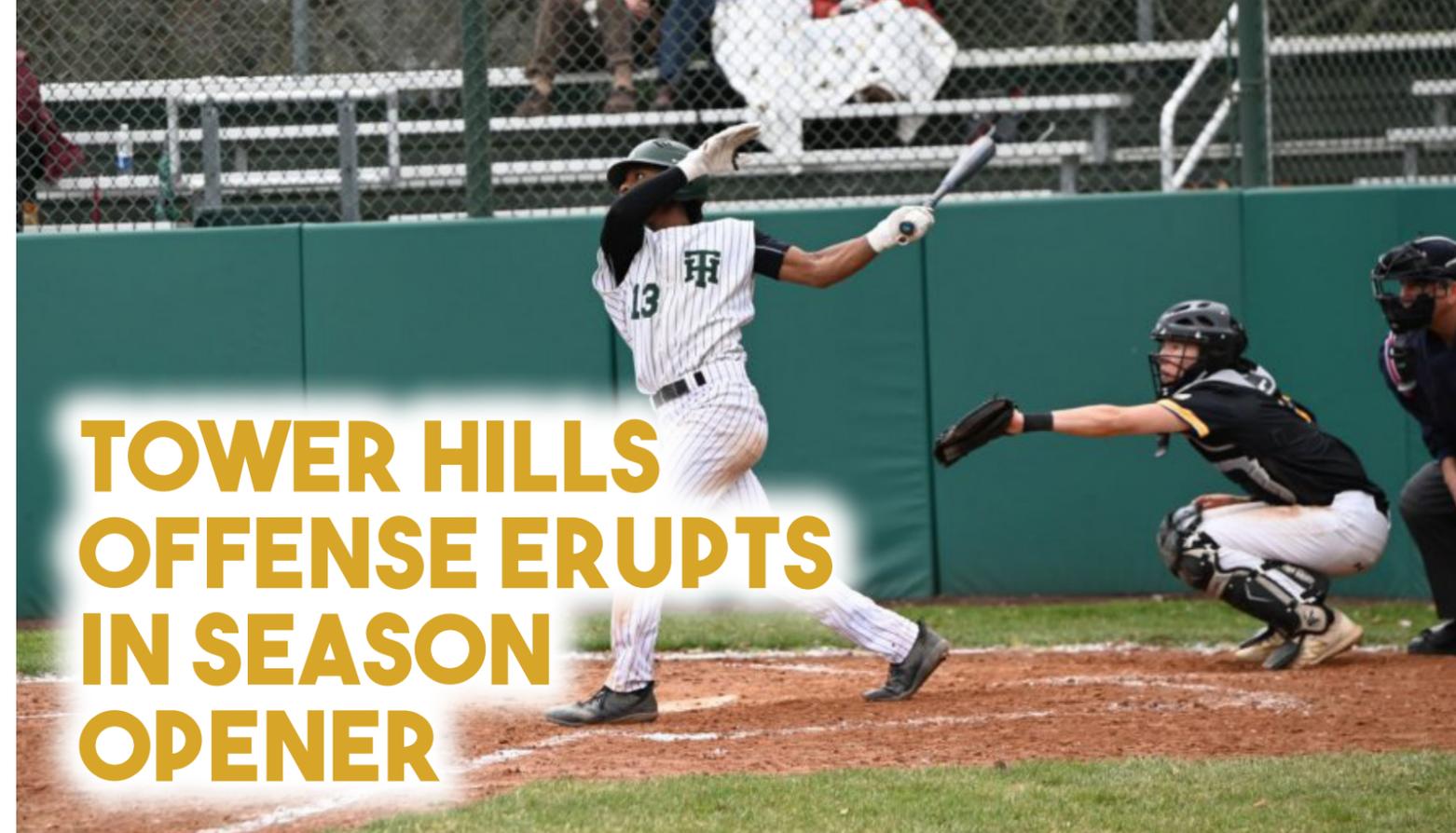
The Archmere softball team pounded out 18 hits in a 16-3 win over First State Military in Smyrna March 31.

Tori Connor pitched two innings, striking out five batters to get the win. She also collected four hits and five RBI from the “lead-off” spot. Freshman Ava Beach finished the final five innings in relief in her varsity debut to record the save. Ryan Vitola and Beach both hammered two-run homers for the Auks. Freshman Riley Worrall hit a solo home run in the seventh for the FSMA Bulldogs.

Archmere evened its overall record at 2-2 (1-1 DSAC). The Bulldogs fell to 0-2 on the season and in the Diamond State Athletic Conference.

In other action March 31, the Odessa Ducks outslugged Newark 28-12 for the first win in school history. Addison Hurst collected five hits while teammate Riley Curtis hit two home runs and had seven RBI.

Conrad’s Bella McKee shut out William Penn 2-0, striking out 11 batters for the win. Also, DMA beat St. Elizabeth’s 15-1 as Alexandria Delcollo belted a homer for the Seahawks.



# TOWER HILLS OFFENSE ERUPTS IN SEASON OPENER

BY NICK HALLIDAY

Tower Hill got their season underway in a big way. After a weather break in which both teams had to take shelter for a tornado warning, the Hillers came alive.

Tower Hill took an early 2-0 lead in the first inning on an error and drew a few walks before the weather delay. Coming back from the weather delay the Hillers bats provided all the thunder. They scored two runs in the third, three runs in the fourth, and three more runs in the fifth as they walked off with a 10-0 win over archrival Tatnall.

Tower Hill collected six hits in the last three innings of the game with four of them being doubles from John Gray, Gavin Heck, Kenyon Motley and Christopher Simon. They collected eight RBI from six different players in a great team offensive effort.

The Hillers were led by Motley as he went 2-for-4 with an RBI and three runs scored. For Tatnall, Andrew Scott, Tre Marcoz and Brody Clayton each had one hit.

Shadowed by the offensive performance Ryan Beyer pitched extremely well for Tower Hill. He scattered three hits over five innings adding seven strikeouts while only walking two batters.



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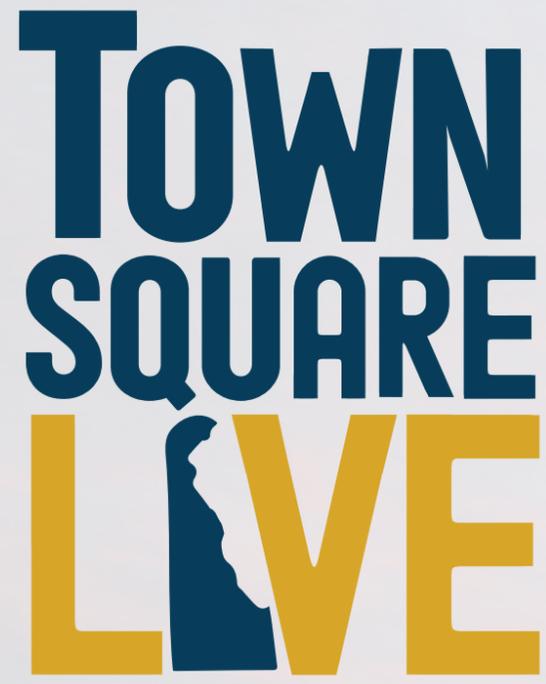


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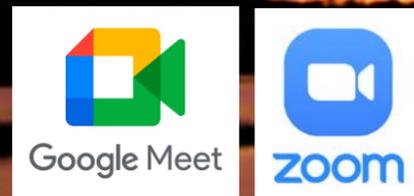
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