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photo link: Delaware Museum of Nature & Science



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DTC Comedy, *One Man, Two Guvnors*



Report: Some Kids Need Help



Bones Hyland Returns Home



Community

TOWN SQUARE LIVE



BUD MARTIN MAKES COMEDY 'ONE MAN, TWO GUVNORS' DTC SWAN SONG

BY BETSY PRICE

Delaware Theatre Co.'s Bud Martin first saw **"One Man, Two Guvnors"** on Broadway a decade ago while it starred James Corden, now host of CBS' "The Late, Late Show."

"It was the funniest thing I've ever seen," Martin said. "I walked out of the theater with my sides sore from laughing."

Corden went on to win a Tony Award for his starring role.

Delighted by the clever staging and determined to one day direct it himself, Martin chose the play to officially end his decade at the helm of the riverfront theater.

"I thought I better do it now or I'm never going to be able to do it," Martin said.

"One Man, Two Guvnors," which started previews this week, officially opens Saturday night, with a special post-show champagne toast to Martin.

He is credited with lifting the theater out of financial doldrums and raising its regional profile, partly by bringing in musicals hoping to open on Broadway, such as "Diner," "Because of Winn Dixie," "Sign of The Times" and "Something Wicked This Way Comes."

The theater also is running a campaign to honor Martin by trying to sell out every show of the run, which ends Feb. 19.

The farce is an updated take on a 1793 classic Italian comedy, "Servant of Two Masters." (Some theatergoers may remember that play was produced in 2013 by the University of Delaware Resident Ensemble Players).

Richard Bean's "One Man, Two Guvnors" updates the show to the 1960s British seaside. In it, a penniless Francis accepts jobs with two men to increase his chances of being fed and paid. He must keep them from meeting each other and complicating matters are an

engagement party with a character masquerading as a sibling who is engaged to someone who doesn't want to be.

'ONE MAN, TWO GUVNORS' CREW

The action involves swift entrances and exits up and down stairs and through slamming doors, audience participation and everything you'd associate with a comedy. D.J. Gleason, who appeared as Eugene in last season's "Brighton Beach Memoirs," will star as Francis.

The comedy features 11 actors, five big set changes, complete with moving pieces on the ground and in the air, and a bigger tech and backstage crew than normal.

Many of the theater's bigger shows such as "Diner" and "Winn Dixie" have relied on outside designers and builders. The theater's staff handled it all for "One Man, Two Guvnors" under production manager Nathan Renner-Johnson.

Martin said he's been surprised at the intricacies of actor movement required by the show.

"When I saw it, they made it look so fun and easy," he said. "This has a lot more physical comedy than anything else I've done...I mean, people falling down stairs, running into doors, falling over things, knife fights."

So the first thing he did was hire movement specialist John V. Bellomo from West Chester University. Bellomo is an expert in commedia dell'arte, a form of Italian comedy that features stock characters and specific motivations such as food or love. The first scene that Martin and Bellomo staged when the cast first gathered at the theater was the most complicated—and perhaps funniest.

[CLICK TO READ MORE](#)



'ANASTASIA'S' EMPRESS MAY LOOK FAMILIAR TO DEL. AUDIENCES

BY BETSY PRICE

After 50 years of acting in and near Delaware, Gerri Weagraff finally is going to perform at the Playhouse on Rodney Square.

She will play the Russian dowager empress living in exile when the national tour of the Broadway musical “**Anastasia**” hits Wilmington Feb. 9-12.

“I’m just really, really excited about coming to perform at the Playhouse in Wilmington,” said Weagraff. “I’ve seen many shows at the Playhouse, but just knowing this is my home and friends are going to come see me when I’m there...I’ve been thinking about it now for like a couple of months and I am so, so excited to be there.”

“Anastasia” is the story of a young orphaned Russian woman named Anya trying to find her family. Conmen convince her she may be Anastasia, the last surviving member of the executed Tsar Nicolas II’s family. The grifters convince Anya to head to Paris to try her luck

with the exiled empress. Inspired by the 1997 animated film, the musical keeps six of its songs but jettisons the character of villain Rasputin while adding a new villain and more than a dozen new songs.

Weagraff’s role as empress is a meaty one. The actress who played that role on Broadway was nominated for a Tony Award. The character only appears briefly in Act I, which takes place in Russia, but she is onstage for much of Act II, which takes place in Paris in the 1920s.

This is Weagraff’s second national tour. She spent 2010-12 touring in “Fiddler on the Roof,” a musical that keeps reappearing in her own life. It was the first show in which she performed. Encouraged by her Drexel Hill, PA, parents, who also acted in community theater, Weagraff was 16 when she auditioned and got the role of Hodel—the middle daughter in the fiddler’s family.

“I instantly fell in love with musical theater and it became my lifelong passion,” she said.

She always considered herself a bit of an introvert, but her parents kept telling her that when the spotlight hit, you come out of your shell and become a different person.

“There’s an adrenaline rush that goes with it,” she said. “There is like an incredible satisfaction. There’s the camaraderie you get working with other cast members. There’s the creative aspect of it,” she said. “I absolutely love it and kind of can’t think of life without it.”

And she hasn’t had to.

“Fiddler” is also the show in which she was performing when she met her future husband, Paul Weagraff, who recently retired as the director of the Delaware Division of the Arts. In that performance, Gerri played Tzeitel, the oldest daughter in the family, while Paul played her beau, Motel.

“If it hadn’t been for theater, I wouldn’t have met Paul. I wouldn’t have had my kids,” Gerri said. “It has truly truly shaped my life.”

A DIFFERENT MAJOR

Gerri didn’t, however, seek a theater degree in college. Instead, she majored in Spanish, planning to be a high school teacher, at the University of Delaware. Then she realized she didn’t want to be stuck in a classroom and became a radio newscaster at the Jersey shore. Her schedule wouldn’t allow her to seek acting jobs.

After she took a job at WILM in Wilmington in 1985, she started auditioning again and in 1986 won a role at the Players Club of Swarthmore in “Fiddler.” That’s where she met Paul Weagraff. They were engaged a year later and married in 1988.

[CLICK TO READ MORE](#)

CAB SENIOR MADDIE BARRY CURATES ART SHOW FOCUSED ON HANDS

BY JAREK RUTZ

Maddie Barry said getting accepted into Cab Callo-way School of Arts in ninth grade, after being rejected the previous year, was the biggest win of her life.

“From there I’ve just been able to grow because I’ve been surrounded by so many amazing artists,” she said.

Now a senior, her high school experience hit a peak Thursday night when Barry hosted the opening recep-tion at Cab of an interactive art exhibition she curated. Dubbed the “Hand Gallery Interactive Experience,” it contained works from dozens of students depicting hands in some fashion.

Hands are a universal symbol beyond race, gender or sexual orientation that show a wide range of themes in artwork, Barry said. Some of the pieces depicted hands reaching out for help, curled in pain, relaxed in rest, aggressively punching and other arrangements portraying emotions. A few of the pieces used hands to depict more complex ideas like eating disorders, ADHD and the juxtaposition of good and evil.



Barry spent about a month choosing the artwork for the gallery, which she then arranged in the way she felt best told the visitor a story. The artists used a wide range of media: sculpture, charcoal pencil, water colors, graphite and more. Some of Barry’s selections were three years old. The most recent piece was created a few months back.

Her love for art came from a passion she shared with a close friend.

“We got into drawing dragons, and that was the really dumb reason I got into art,” she said. “But I just couldn’t stop and then all of a sudden I fell in love with art.”

The two-hour opening night drew support from friends, faculty, classmates and parents.

“It’s really cool because a lot of these were made by my classmates and we worked really hard on them,” said ninth grader Natasha Colman. “It’s really inspiring to see them.”

Seeing the different art pieces from students in various grades made it a fun challenge to identify the artist’s message.

[CLICK TO READ MORE](#)

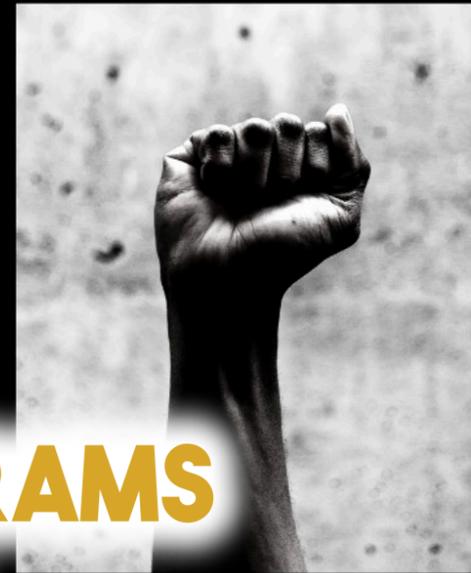
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BLACK HISTORY MONTH PROGRAMS TOUCH ON STATE LAWS, MORE

BY JAREK RUTZ

With Black History Month starting Wednesday, a number of events will celebrate the contributions of Black Americans.

“We strive all year long to make sure that we’re telling the complete history of Delaware, not just during Black History Month, or Women’s History Month, or whatever month it happens to be,” said Daniel Citron, historic sites team manager at Delaware’s [Division of Historical & Cultural Affairs](#).

Museums and school books often focus only on the people who were in power, he said. While there’s value in learning about those folks, it’s equally important to learn about what others were contributing to the country.

“The founding fathers were coming up with these grand ideas and these revolutionary ideas and inspiring

others,” he said, “But then there were the people who were doing those day-to-day jobs of literally building what would become the United States.”

Hearing the full story will help citizens educate themselves in how Black history is intertwined with America’s existence, he said.

“Yes, February is Black History Month, but our goal is to not only use programs and displays in February. This is something that we work on year round,” said Catherine Wimberley, programs and services coordinator for [New Castle County Libraries](#).

Wimberley recommended checking local libraries’ websites to see what events they have to celebrate Black History Month. For a calendar of all 34 public libraries, including virtual events, click [HERE](#).

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“Representation matters and it’s important for our residents to see themselves reflected in successful individuals who look like them,” Wimberley said. “The programs throughout the state definitely honor the legacy and achievements, and highlight that representation, while at the same time acknowledging our faults and struggles as a country and community.”

Here are some programs throughout the month of February:

Thursdays, Feb. 2

Delaware State University: Our nationally recognized HBCU will screen “Out of Omaha” in Parlor C of the Martin Luther King Jr. Student Center at 7 p.m.

[CLICK TO READ MORE](#)



ST. GEORGES BRIDGE TO CLOSE FOR 18 MONTHS FOR REPAIRS

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

The St. Georges Bridge, which carries U.S. 13 over the Chesapeake & Delaware Canal, will close for approximately 18 months for major repairs.

The bridge will close to all traffic starting on April 4. The contractor will begin to close bicycle lanes in February, but at least one bicycle lane will remain open until April 4.

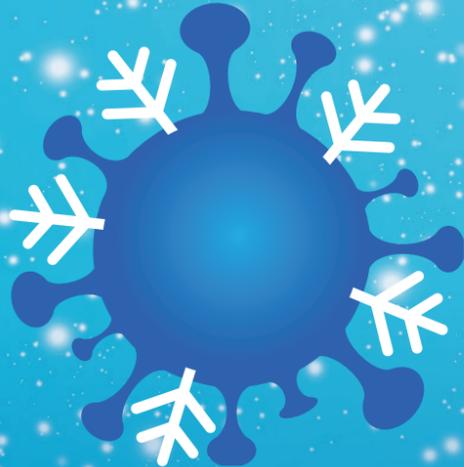
A \$45.8 million contract, awarded to J.D. Eckman, Inc., involves demolishing and replacing the bridge decking, median barrier, drainage features; replacing bridge approaches and roadways; and repairing other bridge structural features. Work is funded by the federal government through Energy and Water appropriations.

The purpose of the repairs is to improve the structural condition and traveling surface of the bridge, a tied arch

structure that was constructed in 1941 and modified in 2010. The last major construction project on the bridge was lead paint abatement in 2000 and 2001.

During construction, traffic will be detoured to the Roth Bridge and Delaware Route 1. Even though the bridges are just a third of a mile apart, detours will be several miles long, to account for the spacing of entrances and exits for Route 1.

The work was announced by the Delaware Department of Transportation, in conjunction with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Philadelphia District.

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TWO LANES OF DELAWARE MEMORIAL BRIDGE TO CLOSE FOR FOUR MONTHS

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

Two lanes of the Delaware Memorial Bridge into New Jersey will be closed from early February through near the end of May for rehabilitating the 72-year-old bridge.

The Delaware River and Bay Authority, which owns and operates the bridge, warns drivers to expect delays, particularly during rush hour and peak weekend travel times. Delays could be bad. A repainting project in June of 2021 led to a weekend backup that stretched seven miles on the bridge, Interstate 295 and Interstate 95, below the Route 1 interchange.

A third phase of the \$71 million rehabilitation project is scheduled to start after Labor Day.

Beginning at night on Feb. 1 and continuing through Feb. 4, construction crews will establish a bypass lane on the Delaware-bound span of the bridge. The two left lanes heading to Delaware will be closed 9 p.m. to 6 a.m.,

with a third lane closed 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. for that work.

Once the bypass lane is created on the Delaware-bound span, work will shift to the side heading into New Jersey, and two left lanes into New Jersey “will be continuously closed until just before the Memorial Day holiday weekend,” the authority announced. The authority’s bridgealerts site gives May 25 as the day the work ends.

The third phase of the project involves the two right lanes heading into New Jersey, west of the suspended bridge midpoint. It’s scheduled to run Sept. 5 through Nov. 21.

WHAT THE WORK INVOLVES

The project includes removal of the top two inches of the deck slabs and replacing the slabs with with an ultra high-performance concrete. The work also involves

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replacing transverse deck relief joints and expansion joints.

The bridge’s weekday traffic average is 40,000, with 55,000 on weekends, the authority said in 2021, when it set monthly records for June, July and September.

Construction of the bridge began in 1949, and it opened in 1951, replacing ferry service that once plied the Delaware River. Traffic became so heavy so quickly that a second, adjacent bridge was called for, with construction starting in 1964 and opening in 1968. The original span is the one heading into New Jersey.





Government

TOWN SQUARE LIVE



MINI-BOND BILL HEADS TO CARNEY; PILOT LABOR PROJECTS INTACT

BY BETSY PRICE

Despite four attempts by Republicans to amend it, the mini-Bond bill was voted out of the House Jan. 26 and will head to Gov. John Carney to be signed into law.

Passing the bill usually is a routine matter, will add 17 projects to the state’s Bond and Capital Improvement fund. Nobody objected to that.

What did draw a lot of heat from Republicans and construction executives was language in the epilogue to **Senate Bill 35** to set up a pilot project that said the winning bids on those four projects would need a workforce that include a certain percentage of union workers and minority workers.

Republicans questioned whether the program was designed to favor unions; why the pilot project was included without wider notice to the legislature and others; why the wording didn’t detail how the projects would operate or what percentage of projects; why the

pilot programs need to be rushed through with the mini-bond projects were needed immediately; and whether the projects would automatically become state practice.

“What strikes me about this whole process is about the transparency and the public engagement,” said Rep. Ruth Briggs King, R-Georgetown.

She said more than 30% of her constituents are Hispanic or Black and none were asked about or allowed to participate in either forming the language or to testify in a hearing about how it would affect them.

Bond bills are created by legislative committees and don’t go through the normal hearing process that most bills do. They are simply presented in the full House and Senate.

The bill’s wording didn’t even specify exactly what the pilot projects are or how they would operate, Republicans pointed out Jan. 26.



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MINI-BOND BILL EPILOGUE

Cerron Cade, director of the Delaware Office of Management and Budget, said the pilot projects need to be authorized by the legislation before they can be fleshed out. It was not designed to favor union, he said, but was included in the mini-bond because at least one and likely two of the construction projects will be bid this spring, likely before the 2024 Bond Bill is passed.

Construction executives complained during a Senate debate it was uncommon for non-union contractors to hire union, and vice versa. That would knock non-union shops out of the running for bids, they said.

Bill sponsors insisted that it was and could be done.

[CLICK TO READ MORE](#)

CONSTRUCTION EXEC: MINI-BOND WILL HURT NON-UNION, MINORITIES

BY SHANNON C. KEITH

A Delaware construction executive says that [Senate Bill 35](#), scheduled to be heard Tuesday in the House, will effectively block non-union contractors from state contracts. Edward J. Capodanno, president of the Associated Builders and Contractors Delaware says a bill to add 17 projects to this year's Bond and Capital Improvements funding, will hurt the more than 500 members ABC represents.

Language in the bill's epilogue includes a pilot program of four projects that demand the winning bidder hire union and minority workers as part of their workforce for the project. Construction officials and Republicans insist that pilot projects almost always lead to wider adoption.

Sponsor Sen. Jack Walsh, D-Stanton/Newport, says the point of the program is to encourage more diversity. Any company can bid on and win projects in the pilot

program, Walsh and Cerron Cade, director of the Office of Management and Budget, said in House hearings. Non-union groups can hire union groups, Walsh and Cade said.

Republicans in the Senate challenged that, saying they had never seen it done.

"We're not discouraging non-union from bidding is what they say," Capodanno said. "But in reality, what non-union contractor is going to hire union workers when they already have a workforce?" He contends the answer is none.

Capodanno said 87% of the work done in Delaware is done by open shut (non-union) contractors.

"If you're really saying the disparity study is why you're doing this pilot program, you have to explain why the requirement is only on 25 percent of the jobs," he said.

Capodanno believes the language establishing the



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- URSULINE ACADEMY

mandatory hiring of union and minorities, along with state residency goals as suggested by the Office of Management and Budget for four Department of Transportation projects, eliminates a large amount of the workforce. Capodanno said Javier G. Torrijos, owner of TORREngineering LLC, was 100% correct when he testified before the House Tuesday that the pilot projects add up to nothing more than a “union mandate.”

Capodanno calls SB 35 a smaller version of last year's failed House Bill 435. “It's the same thing, only a smaller version,” he said.

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RISE IN UNEMPLOYMENT PAY HEADS TO CARNEY'S DESK

BY SHANNON C. KEITH

A bill that would increase unemployment payments by \$50 a week is headed to Gov. John Carney's desk after essentially skating through the General Assembly. The Delaware Senate passed **House Bill 49** Jan. 26. It also will allow the state to use the Delaware Unemployment Trust Fund to pay employer shares of that raise, but only for 2023. The rise will be effective retroactively to Jan. 1, 2023.

Sponsor Rep. Ed Osienski, D-Newark, said House Bill 49 would bring Delaware more in line with unemployment payments offered in neighboring states. It's the first change to the maximum payment amount in four years. Senate Minority Leader Gerald W. Hocker (R-Oceanview) opposed the change.

"Why are we making it more attractive for those who don't want to work?" he asked. "I'm totally upset with people who won't and we need to change that."

UNEMPLOYMENT NUMBERS

As of November, the state identified 22,000 unemployed individuals with 37,000 open positions. During January, the state paid an estimated 4,900 claims, with 25% of those unemployed collecting partial or full benefits. The average time people spend collecting varies between 13.9 and 16 weeks, with a 26-week maximum allowed. The average unemployment benefit is \$292 and the top is now \$400.

As of November 2022, the state's unemployment rate was the fifth highest in the nation at 4.4%. According to Statista Research, the national unemployment rate spiked to 8.1% in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Funds in the state's Unemployment Trust Fund were depleted by the surge of pandemic related claims but funds have been replaced by federal COVID-19 money. Sen. John "Jack" Walsh, D-Newark/Stanton, said the fund

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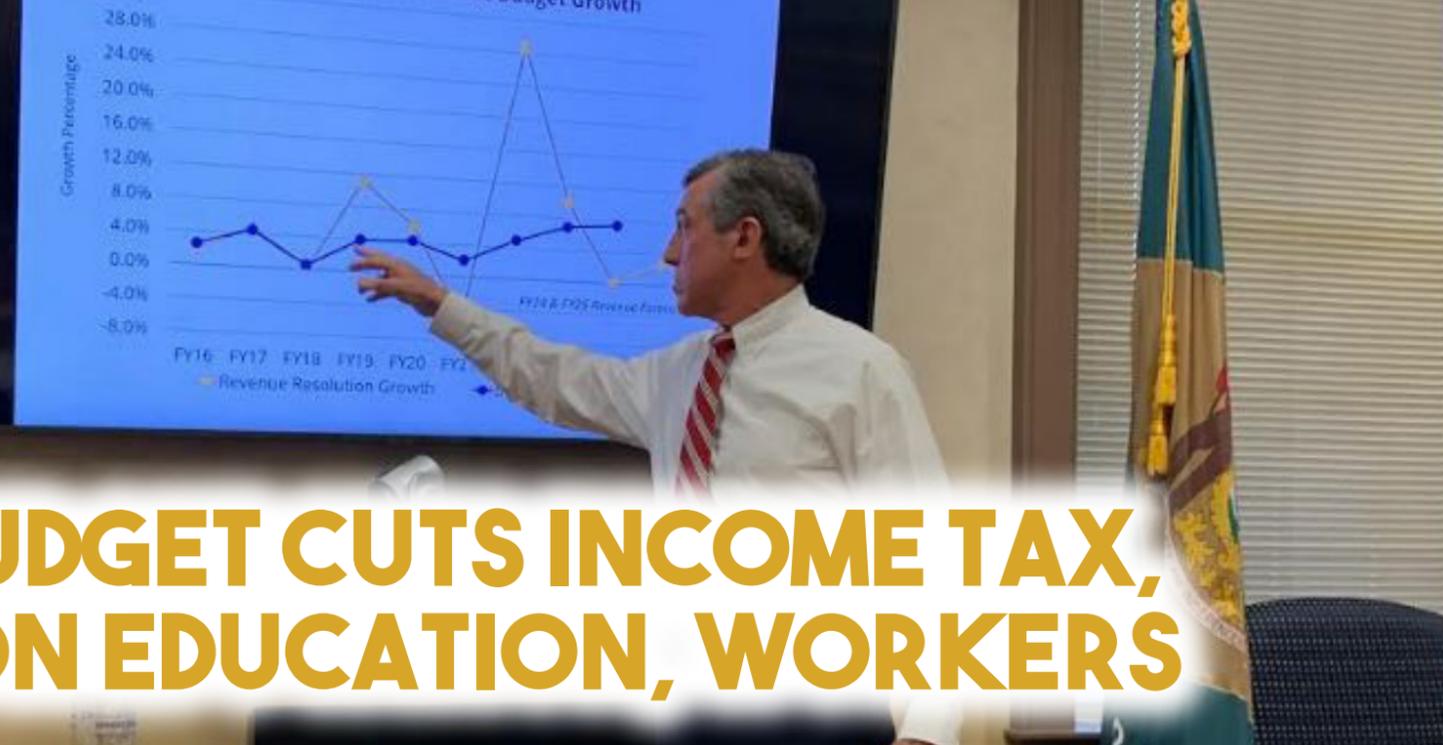
TWO HOURS TO BRING A SMILE

MEALS ON WHEELS DELAWARE

has \$400 million when it normally has \$200 million. A member of the Office of Unemployment testified in a House hearing that the office considers the trust fund fully funded with \$270 million so it could afford to pay the company portion of any additional taxes for the calendar year 2023.

Walsh reminded his colleagues that the bill would help people "and that's what we're here to do."

Helping employers should reduce or hold constant state employer tax rates. The Department of Labor plans to simplify tax rate schedules that are used to calculate unemployment assessments paid by employers. There are more than 70 right now. It's estimated that the tax assessment changes will result in a \$50 million reduction in tax obligations for employers in 2023.



CARNEY BUDGET CUTS INCOME TAX, FOCUSES ON EDUCATION, WORKERS

BY BETSY PRICE

Cutting straight to the “what does it mean to me” point: Gov. John Carney’s \$5.5 billion budget proposal for 2024 will let Delawareans keep more of their hard-earned cash. The budget, which the governor detailed in an 11 a.m. speech Jan. 26, will increase the standard deduction on Delaware income tax by 75% to \$5,700 (\$11,400 filing jointly) from \$3,250 (\$6,500 filing jointly). It also will increase the amount of refunded tax for those who meet federal Earned Income Tax Credit requirements to 7.5%.

Those credits are designed to refund tax to lower-wage earners and are based on tax-filing status, income and number of children. In 2023, the federal credit will be worth \$600 to \$7,430. The state’s rate is lower. An example of a group that qualifies would be a three-child household with an income of \$60,000.

The change in taxes reflects the state’s third year of \$1 billion surplus, fueled largely by federal COVID-19 ini-

tiatives and rises in the real estate transfer taxes with home sales soaring after the pandemic started. Those huge surpluses are not expected to end with the 2024 budget.

Carney’s bill is largely focused on improving education, the environment, raising state worker pay, funding programs that help attract jobs and put people to work through tax breaks and child care assistance, he said.

The budget bill, which must be adopted by the General Assembly before it ends June 30, includes a lot of historic proposals, largely because of those surpluses. It recommends putting \$59.8 million into grants-in-aid, which supports nonprofits; \$1.23 million into bond and capital improvements, which provides the state’s infrastructure; and a one-time supplemental allocation of \$324.9 million that will go to healthcare issues.

REPUBLICAN BUDGET REACTION

Republican members of the Joint Finance Committee,

a bipartisan group that will take Carney’s 2024 budget, said they largely were pleased with it, citing the additions to state funds that help when the state faces deficits, the increase of tax deductions, a focus on affordable housing, increase in programs to help lower-income workers pay for child care, increasing state worker pay, and money for water and environmental issues.

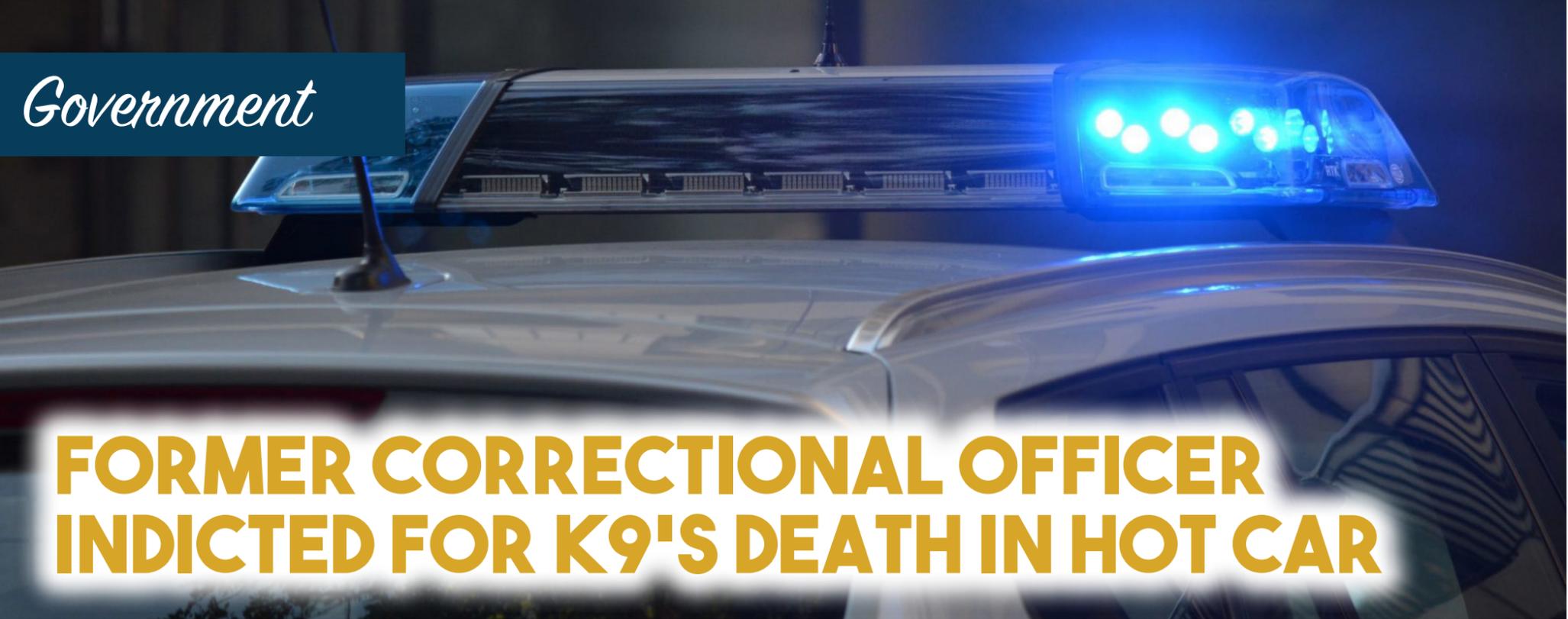
Rep. Ruth Briggs King, R-Georgetown, said Carney showed fiscal restraint by adding to the budget smoothing fund. That and the rainy day fund now contain about \$1 billion, which Carney said will help when the huge surpluses slow.

Rep. Kevin Hensley, R-Townsend, said it made him nervous that the operating budget increase was a percentage point higher than the [Delaware Economic and Financial Advisory Committee](#) recommended and he worried that the state should be putting more aside. He said he was surprised that Carney didn’t put more money into the nonprofit grants-in-aid budget. Many are still coping with losses and expenses related to the pandemic, he said.

“These nonprofits provide critical services to Delaware and throughout the state. They do a fabulous job doing it,” he said. He said he was hopeful that the grants budget could be increased by the Joint Finance Committee.

King said she would have liked to see more money go to public safety. Traffic accident deaths and pedestrian deaths were up again last year, she said. Schools need more safety money, too.

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FORMER CORRECTIONAL OFFICER INDICTED FOR K9'S DEATH IN HOT CAR

BY BETSY PRICE

A former Delaware Correctional Officer has been indicted for recklessly confining and causing the death of a 4-year-old law enforcement animal named Lux. Darrel Wiley, 45, left Lux confined and unattended in an official vehicle for four hours while on duty at James T. Vaughn Correctional Center in September 2022, according to a statement from the Delaware Department of Justice. Temperatures reached a high of more than 80 degrees, and when Wiley returned to his vehicle, he found Lux dead.

Wiley often left Lux confined in his vehicle from June 2022 to September 2022, the DOJ said.

According to the American Veterinary Medical Association, daytime temperatures in a parked vehicle can increase by more 40 degrees in just one hour, the statement said. Over this period of time, Lux was left confined in the car for as long as eight hours.

Wiley has been indicted for one count each of assault 1st degree against a law enforcement animal, a Class D felony; cruelty to animals, a Class A misdemeanor; and official misconduct, a Class A misdemeanor.

Immediately after Lux's death, the Delaware Department of Correction placed Wiley on administrative leave, initiated an internal investigation and contacted Animal Welfare investigators to conduct an independent investigation. Wiley is no longer employed by the Delaware Department of Correction.

"Department of Correction K9s are valued members of our correctional family and the circumstances of K9 Lux's death are deeply disturbing and unacceptable," said Department of Correction Commissioner Monroe B. Hudson Jr.

Hudson said his department has undertaken a comprehensive review of our K9 program to ensure that

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these teams across our facilities operate to the high standards of safety and security that we demand."

Attorney General Kathy Jennings said it was hard to understand animal abusers.

"For most of us, to be human is to be humane," she said. "We all recognize that dogs are completely dependent on us and that owning one is a responsibility—above all else a responsibility to keep it safe. Children understand that fact. The law understands it, too. And figures of authority should understand it better than anyone."



photo link: Christiana High School

CHRISTIANA HIGH SCHOOL			
BOYS TRACK RECORDS	GIRLS TRACK RECORDS		
NAME	YEAR	NAME	YEAR
A. BARRY	11.81	A. BARRY	11.81
A. BARRY	14.20	A. BARRY	14.20
A. BARRY	16.20	A. BARRY	16.20
A. BARRY	18.20	A. BARRY	18.20
A. BARRY	20.20	A. BARRY	20.20
A. BARRY	22.20	A. BARRY	22.20
A. BARRY	24.20	A. BARRY	24.20
A. BARRY	26.20	A. BARRY	26.20
A. BARRY	28.20	A. BARRY	28.20
A. BARRY	30.20	A. BARRY	30.20
A. BARRY	32.20	A. BARRY	32.20
A. BARRY	34.20	A. BARRY	34.20
A. BARRY	36.20	A. BARRY	36.20
A. BARRY	38.20	A. BARRY	38.20
A. BARRY	40.20	A. BARRY	40.20
A. BARRY	42.20	A. BARRY	42.20
A. BARRY	44.20	A. BARRY	44.20
A. BARRY	46.20	A. BARRY	46.20
A. BARRY	48.20	A. BARRY	48.20
A. BARRY	50.20	A. BARRY	50.20
A. BARRY	52.20	A. BARRY	52.20
A. BARRY	54.20	A. BARRY	54.20
A. BARRY	56.20	A. BARRY	56.20
A. BARRY	58.20	A. BARRY	58.20
A. BARRY	60.20	A. BARRY	60.20
A. BARRY	62.20	A. BARRY	62.20
A. BARRY	64.20	A. BARRY	64.20
A. BARRY	66.20	A. BARRY	66.20
A. BARRY	68.20	A. BARRY	68.20
A. BARRY	70.20	A. BARRY	70.20
A. BARRY	72.20	A. BARRY	72.20
A. BARRY	74.20	A. BARRY	74.20
A. BARRY	76.20	A. BARRY	76.20
A. BARRY	78.20	A. BARRY	78.20
A. BARRY	80.20	A. BARRY	80.20
A. BARRY	82.20	A. BARRY	82.20
A. BARRY	84.20	A. BARRY	84.20
A. BARRY	86.20	A. BARRY	86.20
A. BARRY	88.20	A. BARRY	88.20
A. BARRY	90.20	A. BARRY	90.20
A. BARRY	92.20	A. BARRY	92.20
A. BARRY	94.20	A. BARRY	94.20
A. BARRY	96.20	A. BARRY	96.20
A. BARRY	98.20	A. BARRY	98.20
A. BARRY	100.20	A. BARRY	100.20

HOME	1:00	VISITOR
26	PERIOD 2	26
BONUS		BONUS
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Education

TOWN SQUARE LIVE



CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK: URSULINE HOSTS MILITARY ROBOTS, MORE

BY JAREK RUTZ

Dozens of [Ursuline Academy](#)'s lower school students cheered in excitement and awe as a military robot roved quickly around the parking lot and crushed a soda can with full force. As part of National Catholic Schools Week, Ursuline dedicated Wednesday to a theme of celebrating your nation and invited a New Jersey National Guard unit designed to rapidly deploy and help local commanders in case of emergency.

"This week is really about celebrating the uniqueness and the specialness of Catholic schools and Catholic education," said Lower School Principal Sam Varano, "and what Catholic education can offer families and students."

New Jersey National Guard 1st Lt. John Ewasko brought three military trucks and several members of his unit to the school. He has three children in Ursuline's Lower School. His unit is the 21st Weapons of Mass

Destruction Civil Support Team, which is stationed at the Fort Dix Military Base in New Jersey, a little over an hour from Ursuline.

Along with the robot demonstration, students were able to try on alien-looking suits that keep soldiers immune to harmful gasses. They also were able to hop into an ambulance vehicle where they were told what life-saving equipment does.

Not only were the students allowed to play with mechanically lifting and lowering the gurney, but they also got a kick out of a machine that checks for breathing problems using a tube with a camera on the end that's placed in a mouth. The camera's input was broadcast on a nearby monitor, and several students hysterically laughed when they saw their classmates' canines and molars on the screen.

"Having young kids, they often don't know exactly what we do, especially because I'm gone a lot to help out in different areas of the country protecting folks," Ewasko said. "It means a lot to me for the school to recognize us and it's very humbling and also very rewarding to see that they can look at our vehicles and hear what we have to say and see exactly what we do."

The students also learned about equipment that's in the truck that allows soldiers to communicate with others in the unit, as well as satellite monitors that can detect weapons and other threats.

"We always look forward to this week since it's a special week on campus," Varano said. "We have a lot of celebrations and experiences and activities that we wouldn't normally have on a regular school day, and we like to follow the themes of each day." Ursuline plans events each day this week to celebrate different themes.

Monday celebrated community service, and Ursuline collected paper towels, razors and shaving cream, noodles, coffee, fruit cups and more for local organizations.

Tuesday celebrated Ursuline's students, with discounted merch from the school store and free Philly Factory pretzels.

Thursday will celebrate different vocations and will include trivia, games and students dressing-up as their future selves, such as wearing the uniform of their aspiring profession.

Friday will celebrate faculty, staff and volunteers with discounted school clothes, raffles with prizes, a kickball challenge, a hula hoop contest and more.

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EASTSIDE BREAKS GROUND ON \$25 MILLION COMMUNITY STEM HUB

BY JAREK RUTZ

EastSide Charter’s new \$25 million STEM hub boils down to one word: accessibility, said Chief Executive Officer Aaron Bass. That hub was one step closer to reality Wednesday after the charter school held a groundbreaking ceremony for the 24,000-square-foot building scheduled to open in fall 2024.

“The number one industry in Delaware is STEM,” Bass said, but many students don’t know where to start if they want to be an engineer, chemist or doctor. The hub is designed to help make those connections, in class and out.

Early last year, Chemours became EastSide’s lead donor in the venture, giving \$4 million to the project. Since then, **Barclays US Consumer Bank** donated \$1 million, and EastSide received \$3 million in federal funding and \$5 million in state funds to build the hub.

The donations go to **First Community Foundation**, the group that funds EastSide Charter.

The hub will benefit far more than just the EastSide community, Bass said.

“You have the same access to the hub as you would public libraries because it is for all children and adults in Delaware,” he said. “We have people at Chemours already committed to leading ongoing classes to adults and to young people to enter into STEM careers.”

Lt. Gov. Bethany Hall-Long said during the ceremony that while 52% of Delaware’s workforce are women, only 29% of them are in a STEM-related job. Black workers make up less than 7% of the STEM workforce, and Hispanics make up less than 1% she said.

“It starts when we’re young and with the exposure that we have today, change is common,” she said. “Today, opportunity is coming for the young men and the women in this community.”

WHAT TO EXPECT

In addition to classes, the hub will feature a maker’s



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space, a 3D printing lab, computer coding labs, experimental science labs, and a music and tv studio.

“Engineering and math are all part of making music and that’s one of the things we’re looking to do,” Bass said, “**DETV** is one of our partners who is going to be teaching people how to do television and learning those skills in media and journalism.”

Ideally, the STEM hub will help young folks in the Riverside community someday cure diseases, Bass said, but someone needs to be telling the world about it, which is why the DETV partnership will help build young journalists. EastSide also partnered with NASA, which will provide some hub programming.

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REPORT: DESPITE EARLY CHILDHOOD ED GAINS, SOME KIDS NEED HELP

BY JAREK RUTZ

Generally praising Delaware’s investments in early childhood education, a state panel also said “a tremendous number” of underserved children don’t have access to it because of a lack of teachers and the cost of child-care. That puts them at a disadvantage when they go to kindergarten, said the final report from the Delaware Early Childhood Advisory Committee.

The teacher shortage is affecting the state’s ability to implement its programs and contributing to the lack of equity, said Dan Wuori during the committee’s press conference Monday. He is senior director of early learning at the [Hunt Institute](#), a North Carolina education nonprofit that worked with the committee.

The state’s “concrete and tangible progress” will come to fruition, he said, if it can eliminate the teacher shortage,

an issue the state is tackling in several ways. Already, schools are offering alternative pathways into classrooms for teachers, and a state committee is talking about rapidly increasing teacher pay to compete with other states.

The report also indicated that Delaware needs to focus on children’s health, developmental and mental health needs. And it called for families to be an integral part of that process. Much of the early learning that the report talks about involves day care programs that workers need to be able to go to their jobs.

House Minority Leader Mike Ramone, R-Pike Creek South, pointed to bipartisan support for early childhood education and said he likes that the state is paying so much attention to the first stages of education.

“The effort to do something to help enhance the qual-

ity, the accessibility and flexibility of people being able to participate in the early education world for their children is extremely important,” he said.

He thinks this will help rectify the decline of public education that the First State has experienced in the last decade.

“I’m so saddened by the catastrophic failure of our education system and how every time we try to make excuses and then we do something, but we end up scoring even lower and we do even worse,” he said. “Maybe this preparation at these early ages with quality, locations and environments will create a better prepared child for when they enter kindergarten, so I’m optimistic and I’m hopeful.”

During Monday’s press conference, several mothers said that child care was not affordable or even available when they had children. The issue became a crisis during the pandemic when child care facilities closed or had trouble having enough workers to take care of children.

The state stepped in to use federal money to keep them open, especially for essential workers, but the lack of child care has not eased up in recent months. Even when it is available, it’s out of some lower-wage workers reach so some potential employees are staying home with their children.

Gov. John Carney alluded to that last week when he introduced his state budget for fiscal year 2024, which starts July 1. It included expanding a state program that helps lower-wage earners pay for child care so they can go to work.

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PRESCHOOL SPECIAL ED. FUNDING BILL DRAWS STAFFING, MONEY CONCERNS

BY JAREK RUTZ

A bill that would increase funding for preschool students with disabilities was released by the House Education Committee Jan. 25, but not without some concerns.

House Bill 33, sponsored by Rep. Kim Williams, D-Marshallton, would increase funding for those students by revising the current ratio of 12.8 students per education unit to 8.4 students per unit for preschoolers three years and older. The new funding ratio would go into effect July 1, 2023.

That's also the time students with disabilities in kindergarten through third grade will get the same funding change via a law passed in July 2021 which aligned funding for students with disabilities for PreK with kindergarten through 12th grade.

"As a parent with two children that have had developmental delay, I know from this experience how much early intervention is crucial for our children's lives,"

Williams said. "My children were able to receive necessary services early on, but we know too often stories of children that are left behind."

HB 33 also creates a "preschool 2" unit with a ratio 7.0 students per funding unit, in order to accommodate two-year-olds with disabilities who are enrolled in school district programs.

Cindy Brown, speaking on behalf of the Department of Education, defined the beneficiaries as students who "either have a significant developmental delay, autism or some other conditions so they're not considered a typically-developing preschooler." The 12.8 funding ratio has been in place for 20 years.

"When you look at that child with a disability, they really do take and require a lot more adult supervision and more support," Brown said. "So by doing this, we're going to do a much better job in providing all of those different supports that a little kiddo with disabilities

needs to be to benefit from their special education."

Lowering the ratio is crucial to their success, she said.

CONCERNS WITH ADDITIONAL FUNDING

Rep. Jeff Hilovski, R-Long Neck, questioned what metrics were used to land on the new 8.4 number, or if it was just arbitrary. Brown indicated that the number was a result of recommendations from the **National Association for the Education of Young Children** and the **Office of Child Care Licensing**.

The state has 2,138 preschoolers that have disabilities, Brown said. There are about a thousand licensed child-care centers throughout the First State.

"There's been a lot of impetus from the federal government to really look at early identification, especially around autism," she said, "to make sure that we're getting to these kids at a young age."

The change in funding would cost the state \$4,438,304 in Fiscal Year 2024, with the local share totalling \$1,243,680. In Fiscal Year 2025, the state share would be \$4,768,463 compared to the local share of \$1,336,196. The state share would increase in Fiscal Year 2026 to \$5,114,978, with the local share of \$1,433,295, according to the bill's fiscal note.

Rep. Kevin Hensley, R-Odessa, reminded the group of the state's teacher shortage.

"Do we feel comfortable that there's an adequate workforce available to be able to accommodate that growth?" he said.

Brown admitted that was a good point. "We know that our public schools are having a challenge to recruit and retain highly-qualified personnel, so that is a concern, it's a legitimate question," she said.

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DOES SCHOOL BOARD PUBLIC COMMENT BILL GO FAR ENOUGH?

when an item is up for a vote.

Sen. Eric Buckson, R-Dover, argued that the bill should require public comment on each action item vote. He said putting everything into a single segment is simply a convenience to school board members, who are elected officials, rather than the parents who put them into office.

“Not all action items are going to be contentious, and not all of them will even require a public comment because no one will stand up,” Buckson said.

School board meetings often last three hours or more and routinely last beyond 11 p.m. on what are school and work nights. Several legislators in the hearing pointed out this makes it hard for parents to stick around to share their thoughts. Buckson suggested that school boards should hold their executive session, which is a private meeting, at the end of the meeting, rather than at the beginning or middle.

“When you put an open-ended executive session on the front end, it provides convenience for you [board members] but challenges your constituents,” he said.

Sen. Stephanie Hansen, D-Middletown, agreed with Buckson. “It’s a job that you’re elected to do and if you have to stay late then you have to stay late,” she said. “The ability for the citizens to participate right before the vote and hearing the discussion on those particular items is important.”

The bill was eventually released by the committee,

although seven of the eight votes it got were simply on its merits. That means the legislators aren’t necessarily in favor of the bill, but they want it to be released to the full Senate for discussion.

Also at the hearing, newly elected Sen. Kyra Hoffner, D-Smyrna, introduced her first bill. It aims to provide immediate help for students who have epilepsy.

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BY JAREK RUTZ

A bill that blew through the House unanimously got some blowback Jan. 25 in the Senate Education Committee. **House Bill 34**, sponsored by Rep. Kim Williams, D-Marshallton, chair of the House Education Committee, would require district and charter school boards to hold a public comment period before the board moves on to action items requiring a vote. It will not require public comment on procedural items such as a request to approve minutes or enter into executive session.

Williams said most school boards already have public comment segments in meetings. However, she said, Red Clay Consolidated School District sometimes allows for public comment only after its board votes on matters.

The state Board of Education and many city councils already allow public comment on each item to be voted on. Others lump public comment into one section of a meeting, rather than giving people the chance to speak

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HOW TO GET BABY FORMULA

Those who would like to pick up a can are required only to have an infant up to 12 months and proof of residency, which can be government IDs or simply a bill with your name and address on it.

The baby formula being given away is the Care brand from Florida-based **Gensco Pharmaceuticals**, made from milk from Australian cows. Part of the cost of getting the formula to Delaware included transporting it from Down Under.

Lt. Gov. Bethany Hall-Long said in announcing the giveaway that public officials had been flooded with calls from worried parents who couldn’t find formula for their children.

“What we didn’t want was dilution of formula,” she said. “We didn’t want parents and children going hungry. No one should go hungry, even a child. And so I have to say that Donate Delaware—I kid you not—went to the ends of the earth and found this incredible company Gensco in Australia.”

Dave Tiberi of Donate Delaware said it was great to finally see the fruits of their labor. He thanked Bank of America and Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield for their aid.

Here’s where to get the formula:

New Castle County locations

- Boys & Girls Club, Darley Road, 500 Darley Road, Wilmington; Monday–Friday, 7 a.m.–6 p.m.
- Clarence Fraim Boys & Girls Club, 669 S. Union St., Wilmington; Monday–Friday, 7 a.m.–6 p.m.
- Delaware Regional Dream Center, 310 Ruthar Drive, Suite 11, Newark; Friday, 10 a.m.–3 p.m.
- Food Bank of Delaware, 222 Lake Drive Newark; enter through back loading docks entrance; Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, 7:30 a.m.–3 p.m.; Tuesdays and Thursdays, 7:30 a.m.–6 p.m.
- Greater Newark Boys & Girls Club, 109 Glasgow Drive, Newark; Monday–Friday 7 a.m.–6 p.m.
- Henrietta Johnson Medical Center, 601 New Castle Ave., Wilmington; Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m.
- Nemours, Jessup Street, 1602 N. Jessup St., Wilmington; Monday, 1 a.m.–4 p.m.; Tuesday, 9–11:30 a.m.; Wednesday, 1–4 p.m.; Thursday, 9–11:30 a.m.; Friday, 9–11:30 a.m.
- New Canaan Baptist Church, 3011 New Castle Ave., New Castle; Monday–Friday, 5–8 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m.–1 p.m.
- New Castle Boys & Girls Club, 19 Lambson Lane, New Castle; Monday–Friday, 7 a.m.–6 p.m.
- Rose Hill Community Center, 19 Lambson Lane, New Castle; Monday & Tuesday, 5–8 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m.–1 p.m.

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BY BETSY PRICE

Delaware began giving away 44,000 cans of baby formula Wednesday. The formula, purchased with Donate Delaware and other organizations, will be distributed by the Food Bank of Delaware. It will be given away at sites up and down Delaware, including The Rose Hill Community Center, Boys and Girls Clubs, St. Stephen’s Food Pantry, Nemours Childrens Hospital, Westside Healthcare, La Red and more.

The move follows months of stress for parents who rely on baby formula to feed their infants because of bare U.S. store shelves as pandemic production and transportation problems, as well as hoarding issues, made formula—especially some specialized formula—hard to find.

Proper nutrition is critical to infants so their body and brain power to mature like it should, so formula should

PUBLIC HEALTH TO CLOSE COVID-19 CALL CENTERS TUESDAY

BY BETSY PRICE

In another sign that COVID-19 is becoming a part of ordinary life, the Delaware Division of Public Health closed its COVID-19 call center and vaccine call center Jan. 31 because the number of calls has dwindled.

It's one more indication that the state and the federal government are starting to consider how to handle the ebbing of the pandemic as the number of cases drop and vaccines help many avoid critical illness.

Gov. John Carney said Jan. 25 during a briefing about his 2024 budget proposal that the state already is considering how to handle the wind down of federal aid when a public health emergency order is lifted.

The state will need to focus on the dismantling of the expanded Medicaid program, which now is serving one-third of the state's residents because of expanded eligibility rules.

Carney said the feds will remove funding faster than they will allow the state to remove people and will limit how fast the state can remove enrollees. That will mean Delaware will have to pick up a larger part of that expense.

The governor said the state also will have to consider how to help long-term care facilities, which received a lot of federal COVID-19 funds and used them to hire and retain workers.

CALL CENTER GENESIS

Public Health's call centers provided critical advice and aid for state residents from 2020 to 2022 as the virus rampaged up and down the state and especially when the vaccines began to come out in winter 2020-2021.

"We started with multiple call center operators, even having to open a separate Vaccine Call Center when the vaccine program rolled out," said Dr. Rick Hong, interim director of the Delaware Division of Public Health. "However, significantly lower call volume concerning COVID-19 as the pandemic wanes and evolves is allowing us to re-allocate personnel to other critical health work. Most people are accessing information through the web."

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photo by Glenn Frazer



Sports

TOWN SQUARE LIVE



AWARDS HIGHLIGHT 19TH STATE FOOTBALL BANQUET

BY GLENN FRAZER

The 19th annual DOS All State Football Banquet was held Monday night in Dover hosted by the Delaware Interscholastic Football Coaches Association (DIFCA). Players were recognized in the three classifications (1A, 2A, 3A) for All State, Sportsmanship, and those student-athletes that achieved a minimum GPA of 3.75 for academic honors.

The coach of the year in Class 1A was Joey Jones of Laurel, the 2A COY was awarded to Rob Tattersall of Wilmington Friends, and the 3A honor went to Dover's Chip Knapp. The Assistant COY went to Smyrna Defensive Coordinator Dan Wagner. Head coaches that are retiring were also honored. Bob Tattersall is retiring af-

ter helping his son Rob guide Wilmington Friends to the 2A championship this season. Bob is the winningest all-time in Delaware with 331 victories and 28 Independent Conference titles and the school's only other state championship in 1984. Also stepping down from coaching are Frank Moffett of Hodgson Vo Tech (2003-2022) who led the Silver Eagles to four state championships, and Randy Holmes from Mount Pleasant (1997-2022).

Two head coaches were recognized for achieving milestone wins. Sussex Central's John Wells secured win number 200 this season and Bill DiNardo of Salesianum garnered his 300th victory.

I had the pleasure of sitting next to Mr. and Mrs. Hollis Smack. Mr. Smack was honored for his 40 years as a referee with the Delmarva Football Officials Association from 1970 to 2010. He has the distinction of being the first African-American to referee for the Henlopen Conference. Hollis grew up in Bridgeville and played sports for the former Bridgeville High School. He and his charming wife still reside in the small western Sussex County town.

The banquet was held at the Modern Maturity Center in Dover.



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WILMINGTON'S OWN BONES HYLAND BACK FOR JERSEY RETIREMENT CEREMONY

BY PATRICK GARYANTES

Nah'Shon "Bones" Hyland returned back to his old stomping grounds of St. Georges High School in Middletown, DE, on Friday evening for a special honoring and jersey retirement. Hyland, a budding young contributor on the Denver Nuggets who happen to have the top record in the league, was back home for the weekend ahead of the Nuggets' Saturday matchup with the 76ers. Hyland is the all-time leading scorer at St. Georges, with 1,957 career points scored during his four year career.

Bones arrived at the school and greeted family and friends who had gathered in a VIP area and granted some media access prior to making his way out to the gym for the ceremony. Delaware Live's own Nick Alessandrini was able to catch up with Bones briefly prior to the ceremony and asked him what it was like being back in the halls of St. Georges. "You know coming into this, even coming down the stairs here, I had jitters," said Hyland, "this moment for me is bigger than the draft."

The house was packed, a sold-out event in the gym where Bones was cheered for loudly as he entered. A ton of young students and folks who had followed Hyland from the time he was playing in the First State, had filled the entire arena. The scoreboard was lit up in all fives, Hyland's number while playing at St. Georges. Programs were handed out with a schedule of the night and

t-shirts were being sold outside of the gym that had Bones' signature logo on the front and number 5 with Hyland on the back.

The master of ceremonies on this night was Dr. James Connor, assistant principal of St. Georges. He spoke briefly, before handing the mic off to other speakers, Dr. Chad Harrison (principal of SGT), Dr. Shanta Reynolds (former principal of SGT), the mayor of Wilmington Mike Purzycki, Steven "Spoons" Martin (Hyland family friend), Marshay Hyland (Nah'Shon's mother), Rod Griffin (SGT basketball coach), and of course Bones himself.

One great anecdote shared during the night was by Dr. Reynolds when he told a story of how he approached Bones during his senior year about what he was going to do after high school, to which Hyland responded, "heading to the NBA to take care of my family and community." Dr. Reynolds continued by saying as an educator he respectably tried to push Hyland on what a Plan B looked like, to which Hyland said, "there is no Plan B." When Dr. Reynolds asked him about his college major, Bones replied, "whichever major is going to allow me to get to the NBA." Dr. Reynolds concluded that this story is inspirational because it shows how dedicated to his plan that Hyland was and when you are dedicated to things you can achieve a lot of success in life.

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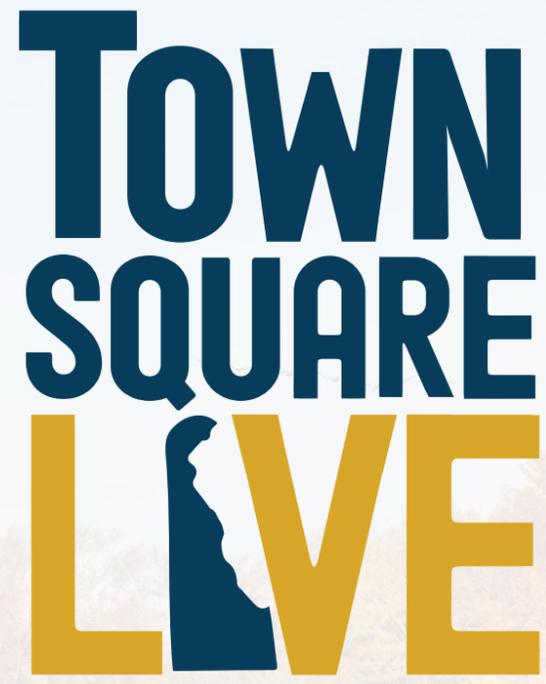
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